



The Seasons attending on Devotion.

U
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

To which are added

(SYLVAN LETTERS;)

or the PLEASURES of a

COUNTRY LIFE,

in PROSE and VERSE.

The Fourth Edition, Enlarged,
With occasional Notes & Copper Plates.

By G. WRIGHT, Esq.

K

Author of *Solitary Walks, Retired Pleasures &c.*



solitude sometimes makes fastidious.

L O N D O N :

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1794.



THE AUTHOR'S PRAYER

FOR HIS READERS.

O MAY this treatise, tho' but small in size,
Teach every reader to be *truly* wise ;
To love Religion's ways, her laws attend ;
And ere too late, to make the Lord their friend.
Should verdant fields, thick groves, and flowery
plains

(The silent haunts of harmless rural swains)
Approve the reader's choice ; O may he find
Some thoughts herein instructive to his mind ;
Which while they suit his taste, may fitly prove
His guide from earth to scenes of joy above ;
For this the Author begs kind Heaven to bless
And crown his labours with compleat success ;
To make his readers, both in life and name,
Christians *indeed* ; in *action*, *thought*, and *aim* ;
That after death they may in glory dwell,
Where may he meet them all ;—till then farewell.

May 20, 1793.

G. W.

VERSES TO THE AUTHOR OF THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

BY A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

WITH equal pleasure and surprize I find,
A youth in this degenerate land inclin'd,
To check the growing vices of the age,
And in *Religion's* sacred cause engage ;
A youth, whom virtuous themes with zeal inspire,
And all his breast with pleasing raptures fire ;
Whose flowing numbers *rural* pleasures sing,
And sweet reflections from each subject bring.
Who dares to leave the too much beaten road,
Which leads from *Virtue, Piety, and God* ;
Who dares to lash the vices of the times,
And boldly criticise on public crimes ;
Go on, dear youth,* the love of *truth* diffuse,
And aid the triumphs of the *virtuous* muse ;
O may you with success espouse her cause,
While such endeavours gain you just applause.

O. B.

* The Rural Christian was written when the author was a youth.

TO

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE RURAL
CHRISTIAN.

BY A LADY.

HAIL youthful bard, within whose every line,
Devotion pure, and Friendship sweetly join ;
Whose thoughts are elegant, and penn'd with grace,
In them the author's pious soul we trace ;
A soul so pure that angels might descend
From heav'n, to call the *Rural Christian*, Friend ;
O while you paint a virgin's deep distress,
What heart-felt woes, my troubled soul oppress ;
Methinks I see the lovely victim lie
In death's cold arms, and mark her closing eye ;
Condemn'd, alas ! unhappy maid, to prove,
Too stern a penance, for too soft a love :*
But when your muse a loftier theme essays,
And sounds in pleasing numbers *friendship's* praise ;†
My soul enamour'd, joins th' enliv'ning song,
And feels those raptures which your strains prolong.
Go on, sweet bard, while saints approve your lays,
'To sing the pleasantness of wisdom's ways ;
May Heav'n succeed your pen, and peace attend
your days.

P.

* Alluding to *Sylvan Letters*, No. 3.

† Alluding to the Ode in *Letter 16*.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

DAVID, the sweet singer of Israel, introduces the *country* in several of his Psalms, not only as the subject, but the *place*, of his meditations, as in the 23d Psalm and 2d verse, *He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters.* Rural scenes are the chosen retreats of the poet, the silent abodes of health, and quiet dwellings of meditation; where variety pleases the eye, retirement calms the soul, and solitude invites reflection.* Whilst the noisy town is swallowed up in pursuits after riches, honours, and amusements; *here* calm felicity and undisturbed tranquillity are enjoyed, far from the hurry of business, the toils of industry, and anxieties of gain.†

Not

* To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging than the entertainments presented in the theatre, or the honours conferred in the drawing-room.

Hervy's Meditations, Vol. II.

† Calm are the pleasures of a rural Life,
At distance far from hurry, noise, and strife.

Retired Pleasures.

PREFACE.

v

Not that diligence is incompatible with Religion, or business an hindrance to devotion :* no, the ALMIGHTY has placed us in different stations, the filling up of which, to the best of our abilities, is part of that duty we owe to God, ourselves, and the community.

THAT a man may be *in* the world and not of it, is an undoubted truth ; and that the greater and more numerous the allurements to sin are, the greater is the conquest, and more glorious the victory, cannot be denied. To be unmoved in the midst of temptations, untainted in circles of pleasure, and unrepachable in an age of licentiousness, are the marks of true virtue and sobriety ; whilst a strict adherence to the precepts of morality, an observance of the laws of God, and living up to the doctrines of the Gospel, are indubitable proofs of genuine godliness, and indicate the *real* Christian.

YET it will be allowed by all, that the *beauties* of nature, and the wisdom, order, and harmony of the great Creator's works, are most seen and best contemplated, in the *sylvan* retirements of rural solitude, and more suited to the temper of a reflecting
b mind.

* The Dutch proverb is worthy universal remembrance and regard,---*Prayer and provender hinder no man.*

mind. If Providence then has given an inclination and opportunities to enjoy, and a desire to improve a *retired* life, without endangering the future welfare of a family, or the emolument of a rising offspring ; wherein it can be stiled censurable or blame-worthy, must be referred to the nice researches into the secrets of the human mind.

THAT *Isaac* went into the fields to meditate, the Scriptures inform us* ; and that others may do the same, without injuring themselves in particular, or society in general, must be admitted.

THE following poem is humbly offered as a companion to the retired Christian in his walks in the *country* ; to lead his thoughts from the different objects which may attract his view, to the great Creator of all things ; while it evidences the benefits of Virtue and the pleasures of *Religion*. On this account the author hopes (however he may be laughed at and despised by the unthinking and irreligious *many*†) to gain the approbation of the wise, religious and discerning *few* ; to whom he would ever desire to approve himself the *real*, as well as

Rural Christian,

FINCHLY, *July 22, 1772.*

G. W.
ADVER-

* Gen. xxiv. 63

† He that strives universal affection to gain,
Shews a world of good-nature, but labours in vain.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE
FIRST EDITION.

HOWEVER the *Rural Christian* is principally calculated for the *Country*, it is not in the least improper to be read by persons residing in the *Metropolis*; who by their several wealth-procuring avocations, may be necessarily detained in town, on the prudent and laudable designs of maintaining their respective families, or providing for their future accommodation and subsistence; and altho' such may not have an opportunity of passing the same objects, or viewing the scenes on which the reflections in the ensuing poem are made; yet let them properly weigh, and carefully observe, the important admonitions it contains; and endeavour in like manner to spiritualize those different employments they are engaged in,* as well as those various accidents and occurrences they must daily hear, read, or meet with, in so populous a city; and the author doubts not, but they will find more real comfort, pleasure and satisfaction, in their own minds, from such a practice, than the world can either

b 2

give

* Good thoughts can never be unseasonable, or too much entertained, while *piety* and *business* are taught to go hand in hand.

give or take away; or the worldling can possibly enjoy, *when his corn, his wine, and his oil increase.*

SOME persons, who are well wishers to the interests of *Religion*, have occasioned it to be ridiculed, and made themselves laughed at, by indirectly introducing *spiritual* similies and reflections, in a *mixt* company, met together, it may be, for *secular* or convivial purposes: this, the author would by no means be thought to recommend, as he esteems it making too light with sacred things, and the means in all probability, of *throwing pearls before swine*, according to the language of scripture; but advises those, who are of so serious a turn of mind, always to have due regard to the *time, place, and company.*

To be frequently in a praying or spiritualizing frame of mind, is one happy mark of *true piety*;* but let not the Christian think it any part of his duty, from hence, to act the enthusiast; for though the Gospel teaches us to *be all things to all men*, yet at the same time it says, *do all things with decency and in order.* 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

* 1 Thessalonians v. 17.

✚ We are not to omit *any* opportunity of doing good, either by our words or actions, in every company; but let us remember we are to think *twice* before we speak *once*, on *religious* as well as *moral* subjects.

ADVER-

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FOURTH EDITION.

THIS treatise having met with a favourable reception from the public, far beyond the author's most sanguine expectations, emboldened him to make some additions to this *fourth* edition, which he hopes will not be found less worthy of approbation and acceptance.

JOHN-STREET, Jan. 18.,
1793.

CONTENTS

OF THE

SYLVAN LETTERS.

LETTER I.

FROM a young lady in the country to a relation in town, describing the situation of her retreat, and her rural employments. *Page*
105

LETTER II.

To the same. Describing a repository or burial place, built in a grove near the garden; with a description of the latter. 109

LETTER III.

To the same. With a description of noon, and a conversation that passed between Miss B. and her, on the receipt and perusal of her last epistle. 113

LETTER IV.

From a minister in the country to a lady in town, giving an account of the death of her daughter; with the melancholy circumstances that attended it. 117

LETTER

CONTENTS.

xi

Page

LETTER V.

From the minister's daughter after her recovery, to a young lady in town ; with some more particulars concerning the character and behaviour of the late Miss M. concluding with a few remarks on the necessity of being always in readiness for our approaching change. 119

LETTER VI.

From Miss F——, the minister's daughter, to the same young lady ; with an epitaph on Miss M. made by a gentleman who well knew her living, and now sincerely mourns her loss ; concluding with reflections on the vanity of all earthly enjoyments without health. 125

LETTER VII.

To the same. Giving an account of Mrs. M.'s arrival at the minister's house, and her behaviour on seeing her daughter ; with a description of Miss M.'s funeral, and the improvement that should be made of such alarming Providences. 129

LETTER VIII.

From a gentleman lately retired into the country, to his friend in town ; with reasons in defence of a rural life, and reflections on happiness and contentment. 133

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the same. Giving an account of the manner in which he spent his time ; with an extract from Thomson's poem on the Summer. 139

LETTER X.

From the same. Wherein he further urges his arguments in defence of a retired life, and concludes with an account of a set of poor country people he had determined to relieve. 144

LETTER XI.

From Miss B. to a young lady in town, inviting her to spend the summer with her in the country ; with a description of the pleasures of rural solitude. 148

LETTER XII.

From Florimond to Alcander, his nephew, advising him against the temptations to which his age and situation exposed him. 152

LETTER XIII.

From Philander to Aristus, a merchant ; with an account of his brother's death, and the great change it had wrought in him ; with the speech his brother made just before his dissolution. 156

LETTER XIV.

From Miss R. to a young lady in the country, describing the pleasures and amusements of the town,

CONTENTS.

town, contrasted with the happiness of a country life.

211
Page

162

LETTER XV.

From Cleander, in rural scenes, to Philos, in the capitol; with an ode on health, which he wrote in one of his evening walks.

165

LETTER XVI.

From Miss L. to a young lady in town, giving an account of a gentleman's falling in love with her sister who was married; concluding with an ode on Friendship, which he sent her inclosed in a letter, lamenting his imprudence in the most pathetic terms.

170

LETTER XVII.

From Miss I. to a relation in town, giving an account of the death of a young lady, an intimate friend of her's; with an epitaph made on her by a gentleman in the neighbourhood.

179

LETTER XVIII.

From Sobrina to a friend, in answer to a question, What pleasures are to be enjoyed in solitude and retirement? with an extract from Thomson's Seasons.

185

LETTER XIX.

From Mira to Sobrina, ridiculing her notions of retirement; imitated from Mrs. Rowe's Letters, Moral and Entertaining

189

LETTER

LETTER XX.

To Crito, a young gentleman, mourning the loss
of an indulgent father. 191

LETTER XXI.

To Cleanthes, with a specimen of a poem in blank
verse, on health and rural solitude, by a youth. 194

LETTER XXII.

From Raltimond to Florolet ; with reflections on
the works of Providence, and the weakness of
human wisdom, a fragment. 196

LETTER XXIII.

From Miss M. to a relation, informing her how
happy she is in her rural situation ; with an alle-
gorical vision, shewing the benefits of adversity. 200

LETTER XXIV.

From a gentleman to his sister, giving an account
of the melancholy death of his wife, through
the hard treatment of her relations ; a true story. 209

LETTER XXV.

From Camillus to Albanes ; with an account of the
death of an intimate friend, and a remarkable
dream he had relative thereto, inclosed in an
elegiac poem on his decease. 213

LETTER

CONTENTS.

BY

Page

LETTER XXVI.

From Theron to Altamont, describing his situation ; with his reflections in one of his evening walks ; concluding with a quotation from Addison's Cato.

210

LETTER XXVII.

A picture of rural felicity, or solitude suitably improved ; in a letter from a gentleman retired from business, to his friend in town ; an extract.

214

LETTER XXVIII.

From Rusticos to Clitander, describing a summer-house belonging to his friend Philenus ; with reflections on a morning's walk ; concluding with an account of the melancholy end of Miss L. a young lady of beauty and merit.

218

LETTER XXIX.

From Eusebius to Alcoret, demonstrating the advantages and superiority of a religious life, even supposing there were no *future* state ; with a quotation from Ray, on the Creation, and Young's Night Thoughts, in defence of his arguments.

237

LETTER XXX.

Tricon's description of his friend Thymander's romantic retreat ; with an adventure of a singular kind, respecting a female recluse, or the fair Sobrina ; an extract.

244

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

RETIREMENT, FRIENDSHIP, AND BOOKS.

A letter to a young gentleman, describing the way to improve a country life ; the blessings of real friendship, and recommending what books to read for instruction and entertainment.	254
Rural Solitude, or the Wish, a poem.	265
The Pleasures of Retirement, an elegy.	266
Solitude best Society, or Arguments in Defence of Sylvan Retirement ; extracted from admired writers, in prose and verse.	271
Sobrinus and Flora, or a Morning Walk, in July.	277
An Evening Walk in the Country, in September.	280
Rural Meditations in favour of Solitude.	286
The Dawn of a Summer's Day.	289
A Lady's Soliloquy in her Garden.	291
The True End of Retirement.	292
The Author's intended Epitaph, written by himself.	295

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION:
A POEM
IN FOUR BOOKS.

BOOK I.

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good !
Almighty ! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair : Thyself how wondrous then !
Ineffable ; *Par. Lost,*

B

THE ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed; an address to the Almighty for his gracious assistance in the work; a summer's morn described; a walk in the fields; all the creation called on to praise the Lord. The transient dew resembles fading beauty; the azure heavens an emblem of a spotless mind; directions for youth at their entrance into life; the sun shining an emblem of the effects faith produces in believers. Bees, (Nature's chemists) observations on them: the sun an emblem of Jesus Christ; the effects he produces in the moral world; a storm of thunder and lightning described; running under trees for shelter compared to a sinner's trusting in his own works, or the law for salvation. A call upon atheists to own the Lord; the fields represent poor sinners under a sense of sin; the shortness of life; the storm illustrated; the author's prayer for his readers.





W. L. D.

Welcome ye Shades To bowery thickets haire:
Thompson

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.
BOOK I.

The Time—Morning.

Scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus, et fugit urbes.
Hor. Lib. II.

WHILE genial Summer clothes the neigh-
b'ring fields,
In ev'ry beauty which the country yields ;
Near the soft murmurs of some purling stream,
Let *rural* pleasures be my welcome theme. *

B 2

MAKER

- * To me be Nature's volume broad display'd ;
And to peruse its all instructive page,
Or haply catching inspiration thence,
Some easy passage, raptur'd to translate,
My sole delight ; as thro' the falling gloom,
Pensive I stray, or with the rising dawn,
On fancy's eagle wing excursive soar. *Thomson's Summer.*

MAKER supreme ! whose all prolific pow'r,
 Is plainly seen in every op'ning flow'r ;
 Whose wisdom shines in Nature's ample page,
 My mind enlighten, and my thoughts engage.
 Thou great Creator and the guide of men,
 Vouchsafe in mercy to direct my pen :
 Teach me to sing, and help me to declare
 How great thy works, how manifold they are ! *
 Thy ways how good ! assist me Grace divine,
 Then shall thy praise resound from line to line.

WHILE some the being of a God disown,
 And all events ascribe to *fate* alone ;
 Let me attempt, far as a mortal can,
 By nat'ral scenes to prove a GOD to man ; †
 Whom we as Christians LORD JEHOVAH call,
 And daily own the first grand cause of all. (a)

ETERNAL

* *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* Psalms cxi. 2.

† What but GOD ?

Inspiring GOD ! who boundless Spirit all,
 And unremitting energy pervades,
 Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole. Thomson.

(a) My prostrate soul adores the present GOD ;
 Praise I a *distant* Deity ? he tunes
 My voice (if tun'd) the nerve that writes, sustains ;
 Wrapt in his being, I resound his praise.

Dr. Young.

ETERNAL SPIRIT, aid my feeble muse,
 My breast, with wisdom from above infuse ;
 Teach me the path which thy own *Hervey* trod,
 " *To look thro' Nature, up to Nature's GOD ;*" *
 And while thy works my admiration raise,
 Let me be lost in wonder, love, and praise.

THE smiling morn, with streaks of rosy light,
 Has chas'd away the gloomy shades of night ;
 The blushing east a crimson radiance yields,
 And dewy spangles glitter o'er the fields. †
 The tuneful birds salute the op'ning day,
 And stretch their warbling throats on ev'ry spray.
 The rising sun begins to warm the air, (a)
 And shepherds hasten to their fleecy care ; (n)
 The fog disperses at th' approach of morn,
 And gentle breezes fan the waving corn ;

B 3

The

* See *Hervey's Meditations* on a flower garden.

† Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
 Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl.

Par. Lost. b. 5th.

(a) All Nature laughs, the groves are fresh and fair,
 The sun's mild lustre warms the vital air.

Pope's Pastorals.

(n) The soon-clad shepherd leaves
 His mossy cottage, where with peace he dwells.

Thomson's Spring.

These, as they change, are but the *varied* GOD, ⁽ⁿ⁾
 They come and go at his almighty nod.
 Let all creation praise its Maker's name ;
 Ye rural scenes, his handy works proclaim. *

BLESS thou the LORD, my soul, his praises sing,
 And grateful off'rings to his temple bring ;
 Who hath preserv'd thee to the present day,
 And as a watchful shepherd guides thy way ; †
 At night to shield thee from the foe's alarms,
 Lays underneath thee everlasting arms.
 'Tis He alone my rising thoughts employs
 On heav'nly subjects and celestial joys :

B 4

In

(n) These as they change, Almighty Father! these
 Are but the varied God: *Thomson's Hymn, l. 1.*

* Soft roll your incense, herbs and fruits, and flowers,
 In mingled clouds to Him whose sun exalts,
 Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.
Thomson's Hymn, l. 56.

† Well may the real Christian sing——

The Lord's my protector, my guide, and my friend,
 His mercy and goodness my footsteps attend ;
 Whenever temptations are laid in my way,
 He graciously keeps me from going astray ;
 The Lord, the creator of heaven and earth,
 Has been my preserver and guide from my birth,
 And will be the same to the end of my days,
 My *Shepherd* and *Guardian* ; to him be the praise.

In sultry noon, reclin'd in yonder grove,
 The banner He spreads over me is love: †
 In every field his goodness I survey,
 And trace his footsteps in the opening day.

As morn advances, see the prospects rise,
 The lofty mountains seem to touch the skies;
 The distant hills a blueish aspect wear,
 And warbling birds salute the fragrant air; (a)
 The glitt'ring dews, which deck the verdant lawn,
 With *Nature's jewels*, scarce survive the dawn; (v)
 O'ercome with heat they quickly disappear,
 And soon are gone, like all enjoyments here.

THUS youthful charms by sickness are decay'd;
 Thus death ere long will every beauty fade.
 Then prize, ye Fair, and daily strive to find
 Those lasting beauties of a *virtuous* mind;
 Wisdom and prudence join'd with inward grace,
 These far excel the most alluring face; *

As

† Solomon's Song, ii. 4.

(a) Hear how the birds, on ev'ry blooming spray,
 With joyous music wake the dawning day.

Pope's Pastorals.

(v) Hosea vi. 4.

* Proverbs xxxi. 30

As sparkling diamonds which your hands adorn,
Outvie the dewy spangles of a summer's morn. (*a*)

THE spacious heav'ns in azure robes are dress'd,
Instructive emblem of a virtuous breast ;
Unmov'd by troubles, clear from wilful sin,
Without, good nature, all divine within ; (*n*)
From anxious cares and vicious passions free,
Such let your mind, and such your temper be.

O may each British youth, with virtue fir'd,
With love of wisdom and of truth inspir'd,
Shine like the morn in ev'ry inward grace,
And promise fair to run the *christian* race.
Let true Religion first your care engage, (*v*)
Dare to be virtuous in a vicious age.
Mind not the impious scoff nor idle sneer ;
But, as enabled, (*a*) boldly persevere

In

(*a*) Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn. *Pope's Homer.*

(*n*) Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,
Who keeps his temper'd mind serene and pure,
And every passion aptly harmoniz'd.
Thomson's Summer.

(*v*) Matthew vi. 33

(*a*) Look up to God for assistance, for of ourselves we
cannot think a good thought, &c. James i. 5.

So with thy childhood may thy follies cease,
 So may thy wisdom with thy years encrease;
 So may religion early warm thy soul,
 Encourage, actuate, and cheer the whole.
 May useful knowledge thus thy mind extend,
 Thy manners polish, and thy actions mend;
 Improve thy judgment, and thy thoughts refine,
 Thy wand'ring steps to Wisdom's ways incline:
 Make ev'ry hour a critic on the past,
 And live each day as tho' it were your last. (n)

As thro' the vari'gated fields I stray,
 A verdant border lines the devious way;
 While flow'rs that on each side spontaneous grow,
 The fine embroidery of Nature show. (v)
 Here various colours catch the roving eye,
 But late unfolded by the genial sky.
 Here bees (*great Nature's chemists*) draw their
 sweets
 From every blossom in these calm retreats.

THUS,

(n) But you with pleasure own your errors past,
 And make each day a critic on the last.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

(v) Each herb the footsteps of God's wisdom bears,
 And every blade of grass his power declares. *Rome.*

Thus, O my soul, may'st thou improvement
gain

From every object on the rural plain : (x)
Thus from the sacred pages daily find
Food for the comfort of thy troubled mind.
And in believing, thus extract a joy,
Which this world cannot give, nor hell de-
stroy. (z)

THE chearful sun, the reservoir of light,
Whose presence makes the day, and absence, night,
Faintly resembles in his noon-day blaze,
The Sun of Righteousness ;* whose healing rays
Enlivening guilty souls, like mists disperse
The baleful vapours of the fatal curse.
Our state of ign'rance (as the gloomy shades
At day-break vanish) quickly He pervades ;
Our doubts, like exhalations, die away,
Before this Regent of *eternal* day. (a)

Our

(x) Every object of creation,
Can furnish hints for contemplation :
And from the most minute and mean,
A virtuous mind can morals glean.

Gay.

(z) Rom. xv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 8.

* Great source of day ! best image here below
Of thy Creator. Thomson's Hymn.

(a) 2 Cor. v. 17.

Our glimm'ring reason, sublunary spark,
 Without His influence, leaves us in the dark, (n)
 And all its followers into ruin leads,
 (Like *unctuous vapours* in the watry meads) (v)
 But when with strength assisted from above,
 Points to those regions of eternal love, (x)
 Where true believers, (who, like stars on earth,
 The blest partakers of the *second birth*)
 Transform'd to suns, shall unmolested shine,
 Thro' all eternity with rays divine. *

BUT lo! a storm seems brooding in the air,
 To yonder cot for shelter I'll repair;

C

The

(n) A moralist may be a good reasoner, and yet no Christian: religion cannot be without *reason*, but reason may be, and often is, posset by that man who has no sense of religion on his soul; witness the deep-learned *infidels* and speculative *atheists* of every age.

(v) See the note in page 72, of Hervey's *Contemplations on the Night*.

(x) . . . So reason's glimmering ray
 Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
 But guide us upwards to a better day.

} Dryden.

(*) If there is a future state of rewards and punishments, (which appears absolutely necessary from the unequal distribution of them here below) the *Christian* must certainly be accounted the happiest man, as having the promise of *this* life and that which is to come.

1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. xiii. 43. Daniel xii. 3.

The calm abode of innocence and health,
 To pain a stranger, and unknown to wealth.
 The gathering clouds in darkness hide the sky
 Affrighted hinds to trees for shelter fly,
 Whose spreading branches draw the lightning down,
 Which swift descending kills the heedless clown.
 Like the good works the sinner pleads in vain, (a)
 Or his *own* righteousness, his fatal bane ; *
 Which, while he blindly trusts in, lets him fall
 Beyond the reach of even mercy's call. †
 So those who seek forgiveness from the law,
 Which calls for death for every single flaw ; (a)
 (Despising JESUS, who, in wond'rous grace,
 Came down and died to save a sinful race, (n)
When

(a) Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

If the sinner could be saved by his *own* good works, the obedience and death of CHRIST, as an atonement for sin, were entirely superfluous ; but GOD forbid any of my readers should be left to imbibe such a dangerous sentiment. Good works are necessary to evidence our christianity sincere, and cannot but be acceptable to, and approved of by GOD, but make no part of our title to salvation, because the sinner pleads *mercy* at the throne of Grace, and not *merit*, unless it is that of CHRIST'S.

* Isaiah 64. 6. Rom. x. 3.

† Job viii. 13, 14. Ecclesiast. xi. 3.

(a) Gal. iii. 10, 11.

(n) Matthew xviii. 11.

Luke xix. 10.

When plac'd before JEHOVAH's awful throne,
Struck with remorse, repeating groan for groan,
Whilst judg'd by Him, whom they on earth con-
temn'd)

Shall by *this* very law be try'd, be cast, con-
demn'd. (t)

LOUD claps of thunder introduce the storm,
And lightnings flash in every dreadful form ;
O may they strike conviction in the soul,
And GOD be honour'd while the thunders roll !
Ye harden'd sinners, hear His voice and live,
'Tis only He can speak the word forgive. (x)
Ye happy souls, who on His name depend,
Fear not the storm, for JESUS is your friend :
By faith relying on His sovereign grace,
He'll prove your rock, your shield, your hiding
place ;*

C 2

And

(t) Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16. John xii. 48.

(x) Mark ii. 7.

* Isaiah xxxii. 2.

Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

The believer is not saved by any works of his own, tho' ever so good, nor *for*, but *in* believing on JESUS CHRIST, as the way and means appointed by God the Father ; therefore St. Paul says, *By grace ye are saved, thro' faith, yet not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God.* Eph. ii. 8.

And when grim death shall close your weary eyes,
 Conduct you safely into happier skies,
 Where troubles cease which haunt this earthly ball,
 There GOD in CHRIST will be your all in all. (a)

IN every clap you hear th' Almighty's word, (n)
 In every flash you see His blazing sword. (v)
 Where's now the atheist, who would fain advance
 That hellish doctrine, all things came by
 Chance? (e)

Who vainly strives his reason to persuade,
 That every system by itself was made;
 Presumptuous man! what—disbelieve a GOD?
 Now trembling come, behold His flaming rod:
 Convinc'd He reigns, implore with inward grief,
 "LORD, I believe; help thou my unbelief."*

Whilst

(a) Col. iii. 4, 11.

1 Cor. xv. 28.

(n) See Hervey's *Descant on the Creation*, p. 254.

(v) The thunder is His voice, and the red flash
 His speedy sword of justice. *Thomson's Spring.*

The author gratefully acknowledges having received much assistance in composing the following work, from Mr. Thomson's excellent poem on the *Seasons*.

(e) See the Rural Christian's Soliloquy on the Beauties of Nature, line 26.

* Mark ix. 23, 24.

Whilst lightnings flash, or thunders roll around,
 And echoing clouds retain the awful sound,
 O come thou self-deceiver, humbly fall
 Before His throne ; attend the gracious call,
 And own the great I AM, who made both thee
 and all. (a)

Ah ! there's another flash, the searching light
 Pervades the cottage and affects the sight ;
 Chills every nerve, and strikes thro' every vein
 A trembling dread ; whilst o'er the gloomy plain
 The storm descending, spreads thick horrors round,
 And peals of rattling thunder shake the ground. (n)

Thus the poor christian under sense of sin
 When doubts prevail, finds all is dark within ;
 While fatan fain would drive him to despair,
 He seeks for comfort, but no comfort's there :

C 3

Con-

(a) John i. 3.

Col. i. 16.

(n) This orb's wide frame with the convulsion shakes,
 Oft opens in the storm, and often cracks ;
 Horror, amazement, and despair appear,
 In all the hideous forms which mortals fear ;
 Exploded thunder tears the embowel'd sky,
 And sulph'rons flames a dismal day supply.

Blackmore.

Conviction's flashes only serve to show,
 Amidst the darkness, scenes of greater woe;
 His guilt how heinous, and how strong his
 foe!

OBSERVE the change! how dull the country
 seems,
 When clouds obscure the sun's enliv'ning beams;
 While distant prospects, view'd with great delight,
 Whelm'd by the tempest, vanish from the sight.
 Where e'er I look all nature seems forlorn,
 The flocks and herds, the fields and meadows
 mourn.

So mourns the troubled soul, renew'd by grace,
 When fears arise, and JESUS hides His face. ||
 He hears aghast, the soul that sins shall die,
 Asham'd and hopeless, knows not where to fly;
 'Till faith in exercise, makes this reply;
 "Tho' CHRIST awhile His presence may remove,
 "He'll not forsake the objects of his love. †
 "He

|| David's language under the hidings of GOD's countenance was, *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever, doth his promise fail for evermore?* Psalm lxxvii. 7, 8, 9, 10.

† Deuteronomy xxxi. 6, 8.

" He ever lives to plead the sinner's cause, *
 " Who seeks His favour and obeys His laws,
 " Who takes Him only for his trust and guide,
 " For such He suffer'd, and for such He died."
 By faith beholding CHRIST, his doubtings cease,
 Hope calms his fears, and all within is peace. (a)

BUT see! the neighb'ring vallies smoke with
 rain,
 The raging tempest sweeps along the plain,
 Surrounds the cottage of the village swain;
 While rural sports no longer fill the place,
 But ghastly fear appears in every face.

So when afflictions seize the *guilty* soul,
 And fell distempers rage without controul;
 If not delirious, O what words can paint
 His inward horror! all expression's faint;
 Satan upbraids him, there's no hope for you,
 Conscience presents his numerous crimes to
 view! (t)

C 4

What

* Heb. vii. 25.

(a) Ib. vi. 18, 19

(t) Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die. *Young.*

Religion will afford her followers living comforts in dying moments, but vice can yield nothing to her votaries at such a time, but what will aggravate their despair; therefore prays the Prophet, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* Numb. xxiii. 10.

What mercies slighted, and what grace abus'd ;
 He cannot pray, his thoughts are all confus'd.
 In vain physicians try their healing arts,
 Thro' ev'ry vein the raging fever darts ;
 His pains increase, his dreadful end is near
 Yet nought to hope for, but has all to fear.*
 No GOD to go to, (a) Oh ! how sad the thought !
 No plea for mercy when to judgment brought ;
 Without a promise which might comfort yield,
 When death has got the last commission seal'd ; (n)
 Without a Saviour able to engage,
 To hide him from an injur'd Sov'reign's rage ;
 Without a friend to make his life his care,
 To mourn his sorrows, or his pains to share ;
None,

* Psalm lxxiii. 19.

Ps. xxxiv. 21.

(a) Prov. xv. 29.

(n) Among the numerous advantages the real Christian has over the ungodly, are the following : When laid on a sick bed or in the views of death and a future state, he has a GOD to pray to, whose ears are ever open to his people's cries ; a promise of mercy to trust in for his encouragement, and a REDEEMER to procure him pardon and salvation at the judgment day ; which reviving considerations support and animate him, when the world and all things in it, cannot yield him the least consolation, and make him say with the Apostle Paul, when taking leave of all terrestrial enjoyments, *To die is gain* : to these pleasing reflections the sinner is an entire stranger, and therefore of such a one it is declared in Scripture, *There is no hope in his death.* Prov. v. 23.

None, all around him, who his case bemoan,
 Or make (by sympathy) his griefs their own.
 Thus wretched sinners, who their GOD deny
 And for salvation on *themselves* rely,
 Live unbelov'd, and unlamented die.

}

THE flocks and herds that fed on yonder ground,
 Are swept away and in the torrent drown'd.
 Th' industrious husbandman, to sloth unknown,
 Struggles with death in meadows late his own.

SEE how precarious is the life of man,
 Short and uncertain is our earthly span ; †
 A few more years, or weeks, or moments past,
 And you (tho' now in health) may breathe your
 last ; *

For know, O man, when 'tis thy Maker's will,
 " *A fly, a grape-stone, or a hair may kill.*" (a)
 When Nature's foe receives the dire command,
 None can elude or stay the tyrant's hand. (n)

THOU

† We stand in jeopardy every moment.

* Job vii. 1, 6. Luke xii. 20.

(a) Prior's Variety of Deaths.

(n) Ps. lxxxix. 48.

THOU must not, youth, on *numerous* years
depend,

For unknown accidents thy steps attend ; *
Disorders numberless await thee here,
Thy greatest pleasures may thy bane appear.
Some sudden illness soon may stop thy breath,
And prove an inlet to *eternal* death. †
The *old* must go, yet prize the present day,
For 'tis as certain that the *younger* may. (a)
Health, like the sun, is hastening to its goal,
Storms of distress may overtake thy soul, (n)
And thy vain hopes (as on the billows tost,
A scatter'd fleet) may be for ever lost. (v)

THE

* The uncertainty of life and certainty of death, should persuade young and old, rich and poor, to endeavour to be always in *habitual* as well as *actual* readiness for their last great change. Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.

† Rom. vii. 5. Eccles. ix. 12. Chap. viii. 6, 13.

(a) Eccles. xi. 9, 10. Chap. xii. 1

(n) Job viii. 13, 14. Prov. x. 28. Chap. xi. 7.

(v) The rose is fragrant, but it fades in time,
The violet sweet, but quickly past its prime :
White lilies hang their heads and soon decay,
And whiter snow in minutes melts away ;
Such and so withering is our blooming youth.

.

Dryden.

THE pleasant prospects now are seen no more,
 But all around, a sea without a shore ;
 The fields and hedges under water lie,
 And travellers belated sink and die,
 Or hurried forward down the swelling wave,
 In vain resisting, meet a watery grave.

LEARN hence, how great the danger to delay
 Unfeign'd repentance 'till a future day, *
 Which ne'er may come, to your eternal cost ;
 For he who dies in sin, *forever's* lost. (a)
 Your day of life will shortly have an end, (n)
 Dark clouds of sickness may a storm portend :
 The present hours will ne'er return again,
 Your sun may set, or be eclips'd in pain ;
 The passing day you now with folly slight,
 May quickly end in an *eternal* night ; (v)
 The evening soon will come, your race be o'er,
 The places now you know, you'll ere long know
 no more.

BUT

* Luke xiii. 3.

John iii. 36

(a) Eccles. xi. 3.

(n) Rom. xiii. 12

(v) No one ever repented giving himself up to God too soon, but many that they put it off 'till it was too late ; one sinner was pardoned at the last hour, that none might *despair*, and only one, that none might *presume*. Luke xxiii. 43.

BUT see ! the rivers o'er the vallies spread,
 And fishes swim where lately oxen fed.
 'Think, while this tempest overflows the land,
 A far more dreadful storm is near at hand ;
 For which, if not prepar'd, you'll surely dwell
 In endless flames, with souls accurs'd in hell. (x)
 As waters cover now the fertile ground,
 May true contrition thus thine heart surround, }
 And in its current all thy sins be drown'd (a). }
 May thunders of conviction shake thy soul,
 And thro' thy breast awakening terrors roll ;
 While conscience flashes o'er thy guilty mind,
 And floods of tears an easy passage find ; *

May

(x) Matt. xxv. 41.

(a) One would think there needed no other arguments to move a sinner to repentance, than to tell him, unless he repents he shall certainly perish ; and if he does repent timely and sincerely, by living a life of piety and virtue, he shall be forgiven and saved. He who truly repents, is greatly sorrowful for his past sins, not with a superficial sigh or tear, but a pungent afflictive sorrow, which excites a man not only to hate the sin, but teaches him to mourn it before God, and earnestly beg the forgiveness of it.

Sir Richard Steele.

* The benefits of true repentance.

*When sinners mourn for sin, Heav'n owns the tears,
 Approves the sorrow and dispels their fears ;
 The LORD with pity views them from above,
 Hears their complaints and answers them in love ;*

And

May *feast* † of comfort overwhelm thy pains,
And virtue dwell where vice at present reigns.*

This deluge, like th' o'erflowing Nile, (a)
Shall make thee fruitful prove ;

*And while by faith their hopes on CHRIST are built,
A Saviour's precious blood absolves their guilt ;
His spotless righteousness becomes their plea,
And GOD well pleas'd accepts and sets them free ;
In mercy pardons what they've done amiss,
And makes them heirs of everlasting bliss.*

Rom. viii. 1, 16, 17.

† The reader will excuse the impropriety of the expression, in order to carry on the allegory.

* The diseases naturally attending the pursuit of several gratifications, evidently prove vice to be its own punishment ; while the inward pleasure and self-approbation ever resulting from a virtuous life, happily demonstrate virtue to be its own reward ; agreeable to the poet's assertion,

To certain bliss each step of virtue bends,
Whilst what begins in vice in misery ends.

(a) That part of Egypt where the Nile is (being seldom watered by showers) Providence so orders it, that the Nile overflows its banks once a year, by which the country becomes healthy and fruitful, which otherwise would be but as a barren desert.

Thomson's Travels.

Thy soul to JESUS reconcile,
And fill thee with his love. *

* The late ingenious Dr. *Watts*, in his 51st Psalm, has these beautiful lines on a repenting sinner.

Shew pity, LORD, O LORD, forgive,
Let a repenting sinner live :
Are not thy mercies large and free ?
May not a sinner trust in Thee ?
O may Thy love inspire my tongue,
Salvation shall be all my song ;
And all my pow'rs shall join to bless
The LORD my strength and righteousness.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK II.

. I solitary court
The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
Of Nature ever open ; aiming thence,
Warm from the heart to learn the moral song.

Thomson.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE storm over, a rainbow appears, compared to a promise sent home to the believer under sickness, or a reprieve to a condemned malefactor; an address to Devotion; description of the country after the waters are abated; a simile; song of praise and thanksgiving; the Trinity invoked on the behalf of sinners; the benefits of prayer, and the object of it pointed out; a walk through the meadows; the Almighty appears in all His works; clouds a shelter from heat, the sad consequences of them in a storm, reflections thereon; noon described; an address to the Redeemer; heat decays flowers; sickness destroys beauty; Zephalinda's death, a thoughtless young woman; a grove described; a solemn song and prayer to God.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.
BOOK II.

The Time—Noon.

Serenitas post tempestatem : post mortem, vita.

THE lightnings cease, the thunders roll no more,
The breaking clouds proclaim the tempest o'er,
While less'ning waters check our restless fears,
And in the *South* the cov'nant bow appears ; *
Like a sweet promise sent to cheer the soul,
O'er whom the waves of sharp affliction roll ; (a) .

D 3.

Or

* Jove's wond'rous bow of three celestial dyes,
Plac'd as a sign to man, amidst the skies. *Pope's Homer.*

(a) So cheers some pious saint a dying sinner,
(Who trembled at the thoughts of pains to come)
With Heav'n's forgiveness, and the hopes of mercy.

Mr. Row.

Or as the welcome news of a reprieve
 To a poor wretch whom satan's wiles deceive ;
 Condemn'd by justice, near his shameful end,
 In mercy's pardon'd, and still lives to mend ; (v)
 O grant, all-gracious Heav'n ! his future days
 May be employ'd in grateful songs of praise ;
 While deep contrition fills his troubled mind,
 May he forgiveness thro' the SAVIOUR find.
 Cleanse thou his soul, O GOD ! whose mighty hand
 Has call'd the waters off the fertile land ;
 And give him grace, which like the bow may prove,
 A constant sign of thy *preserving* love ; *
 From his polluted heart take every stain,
 And ne'er permit him, LORD ! to sin again.

ASSIST me, pure Devotion ! while I trace
 The GOD of Nature and the God of Grace
 Thro' all his works. (a) O thou celestial maid,
 Now condescend to grant thy sacred aid ;

Instruct

(v) This refers to an unhappy young man, who, under condemnation for a highway robbery, had a reprieve sent him at the place of execution.

* Gen. ix. 13, 14, 15, 16.

(a) True : all things speak a God ;
 Take God from nature, nothing great is left.

Dr. Young.

Instruct a *youthful* bard, (*n*) in lofty lays
To sing the great Almighty Maker's praise.

THE plains forsaken by the floods appear
In all the beauties of the smiling year ;
The fields their variegated robes renew,
And pleasant prospects rise again to view ;
The distant meads their verdant clothing wear,
And tuneful birds fly warbling thro' the air ;
The neighbouring vallies, late by floods oppress'd,
In sight appear, in deeper verdure drest.

LIKE the true Christian whom the rod refines,*
Or as the sun eclips'd, the brighter shines,
So may'st thou, reader, freed from every sin,
When death arrives, a happier life begin ;
Where storms and tempests shall forever cease,
In blissful regions of eternal peace.
(When clouds of doubt and dark'ning fears are o'er)
There may'st thou shine to be eclips'd no more. (*a*)

THE

(*n*) The author was about 22 years of age when he wrote this treatise.

* Is. xlviii. 10. Zach. xiii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 7. Mal. iii. 3.

(*a*) Matt. xiii. 43. Dan. xii. 3.

THE sun appearing dries the humid earth,
 And village swains resume their rural mirth ;
 While joy and gratitude their looks declare,
 For GOD's protecting and peculiar care :
 Let me, with rev'rence, join to praise His name ;
 Come, grateful love, and all my breast inflame.

WHEN rising waters spread destruction round,
 And swelling billows men and cattle drown'd ;
 When certain death appear'd so near in view,
 He interpos'd, and straight the floods withdrew.
 At His command the boist'rous winds are still,
 The raging storm obeys His mighty will : *
 He speaks, and lo ! the tempest hears his voice, (a)
 His gracious word the delug'd earth rejoice.

O SPEAK to sinners overwhelm'd in sin,
 And still the storms which daily rage within ;
 Call off their thoughts from fixing here below,
 Change thou their hearts, and banish ev'ry woe.

THOU

* Job. xxxvii. 8, 10, 11. Psalm civ. 6, 7, 8, 9.

(a) The Christian in every trouble finds comfort from the reflection, that the God in whom he trusts, has all nature at his command, and the keys of death, hell, and the grave in his possession ; and not only is *able* but as *willing* to make all things work together for his good. Dan. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 28.

THOU Sun of Righteousness, arise and shine;
 Disperse their fears with quick'nin^g rays divine;
 Clear up their doubts, those heavy clouds dispel,
 Forgive their sins which sink them down to hell;
 Teach them to mourn the evil of their ways,
 Trust in thy merits, and proclaim thy praise;
 While echoing earth their grateful song retains,
 And JESU's name fills all the list'ning plains.

ETERNAL SPIRIT, melt their souls to love,
 Set their affections more on things above;
 O cleanse their stubborn hearts defil'd with guilt,
 And may their hopes be all on JESUS built. *
 Their natures purify, by sin depriv'd,
 Their persons justify, by vice enslav'd;
 Renew them wholly and throughout by grace,
 In soul and body, every stain efface;
 Comfort their minds and teach them how to pray,
 For of themselves they know not what to say;
 Help them to come with boldness to the throne,
 And humbly make their various troubles known
 To Him, who ever lives, the head and corner
 stone. †

BY

* Rom. xv. 12. † Ephes. ii. 20. 1 John v. 13. 1 Cor. iii. 11.

There is no other name given under Heaven and among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of JESUS, no other foundation can any man lay, than that is laid which is JESUS CHRIST. Acts iv. 12.

By pray'r believers sweet communion gain ;
 Ask and receive, none ask, by *faith* in vain ; (a)
 This is the key which to a sinful race,
 Unlocks the treasures of eternal grace : (n)
 By this alone, thro' JESUS, we receive
 'The greatest blessings that a God can give. (v)

THENCE learn in ev'ry trouble where to go,
 Put not your confidence in things below ;
 ON CHRIST depend, to Him for succour fly,
 Believe in Him *alone*, that when you die,
 You may thro' Him eternal life obtain,
 Who died on *earth*, that we in *Heav'n* might reign.*

As thro' the verdant meads I pass along,
 Far from the crouded city's noisy throng ;

With

(a) Matt. xxi. 22.

(n) *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much:*
 James v. 16, 17, 18.

(v) Matt. vii. 7. Mark xi. 24.

A soul in commerce with her God, is Heav'n ;
 Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life ;
 The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart.

Dr. Young.

* John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. viii. 9. Rev. i. 5, 6.

With secret pleasure all around I view,
 The works of GOD, stupendous, wise and true ; (a)
 The trees, the birds, and every beauteous flow'r,
 Declare His wisdom and proclaim His pow'r ;
 Yon fields of corn His bounteous goodness show, (t)
 And winds, His plenty thro' the nations blow ;
 Meandering rivers as they gently glide,
 His praises murmur ; and on every side
 The charms of nature rising to the sight,
 Claim admiration, while they all unite
 To shew his handy works who brought those
 scenes to light. (v)

So thro' thy life may grace appear and shine,
 With thy profession may thy practice join,
 To shew thy faith and prove thy birth *divine*.* }
 O may thy path like yonder chearing ray,
 Still brighter shine unto the perfect day ; (a)

And

(a) Heb. i. 10.

(t) Deut. xi. 14, 15.

(v) Nature attend ! in adoration join,
 And ardent raise one general song to HIM.

. Thomson.

* *Faith without works is dead : shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works ; by the fruit is the tree known : 'tis not merely professing religion, but living up to the rules of it, that proves a man a Christian.* Matt. xii. 35, 37. Chap. vii. 21.

(a) Prov. iv. 18.

And ev'ry fore affliction only prove,
The means to fit thee for the world above. (n)

THE shifting clouds with wat'ry stores replete,
In summer yield a shelter from the heat ;
Or softly melting into gentle show'rs,
Refresh the earth and chear the drooping flow'rs.
But when JEHOVAH gives the dread command,
To overwhelm a guilty sinful land ;
Like horrid cataracts they quick descend,
The rivers swell, and in a deluge end. ||
Thus every mercy he can soon remove,
And make our greatest comforts, *curfes* prove.
Then let it, Christian, be thy daily pray'r,
(However num'rous thy enjoyments are)
Most gracious GOD! from whom all goodness flows,
Bless thou the blessings which thine hand bestows.*

BUT

(n) The great similarity between these and several other lines in the following poem, together with the repetitions on the same subject, will not, it is hoped, be disgusting; as the author's chief design thro' the whole, is to reconcile the Christian to every affliction he may meet with, by reminding him, that there is a *need be* for all. 1. Pet. i. 6.

|| Genesis vii. 11, 12.

* Prov. x. 12.

BUT lo! the sun hath gain'd the *middle* sky,
 The fleecy clouds his ardent preference fly; (a)
 Without a spot the azure Heav'ns appear,
 Fair as the day and as the season clear.
 Now distant hills are scorch'd by sultry beams,
 And every rising ground an *Ætna* seems. (n)
 The lab'ring hind to some cool shade repairs,
 And in his slumbers still pursues his cares;
 Whilst lowing oxen with the bleating sheep,
 Beneath the trees or under hedges sleep;
 Aerial songsters seek the leafy groves,
 And faintly warble out their little loves.
 The pensive angler in yon cave reclines,
 To sweet repose his weary limbs resigns,
 While o'er the plain the sun resistless shines.

THUS shine, thou SON OF GOD, in ev'ry soul,
 Burn up our vices and our sins controul;

E

With

(a) 'Tis raging noon, and vertical the sun
 Darts on the head direct his forceful rays:
 O'er heav'n and earth, far as the ranging eye
 Can sweep, a dazzling deluge reigns: and all
 From pole to pole is undistinguish'd blaze.

Thomson.

(n) A burning mountain in Sicily, whose top is constantly
 enveloped in smoke.

With unremitting ardour let thy rays
 (As grafs is wither'd by the noon-tide blaze)*
 Destroy our evil habits, ere they grow,
 And ripen into fruits of endless woe.

As now the thirsty ground in chinks appears,
 And seems to ask the clouds' refreshing tears ;
 As hunted harts pant for the cooling brook,
 So may our souls, alone to JESUS look ; (a)
 And in that fountain open'd by Him, lave,
 Whose healing streams the blest partakers save. (n)

BEFORE the heat the flow'ry race decay,
 And all their beauties drooping fade away ;
 So fade the Fair when sore afflictions reign,
 And deadly fevers boil in every vein. (v)
 The Beauty then no longer boasts her charms,
 But each new pain produces fresh alarms ;
 While full of horrors by reflection led,
 She mourns the time without improvement fled ; ||
 Or

* James i. 11. (a) Ps. xlii. 1, 2. (n) Zac. xiii. 1.

(v) Who can unpitying see the flowery race
 Shed by the morn, their new-flush'd bloom resign
 Before the parching beam ? So fade the fair,
 When fevers revel thro' their azure veins. *Thomson.*

|| Time wasted, is existence ; us'd, is life ;
 A moment we may need, when worlds want wealth
 To buy. *Young's Night Thoughts.*

Or raving senseless meets her dreadful end,
Without a God, a father, or a friend.*

So inconfid'rate *Zephalinda* died,
Just in the bloom of youth and beauty's pride ;
Whose sole delight was merely to be fine,
At balls, the play-house, or at court to shine ;
Whose only aim to catch the roving eye,
With all the colours of a *summer's* fly ;
Her beautiful face but serv'd to make her vain,
And love of admiration prov'd her bane :
Returning late one evening from the play,
(Where oft she went to pass the hours away ;
In each new fashion sure to be attir'd,
By coxcombs flatter'd, and by fools admir'd)
A dread disorder seiz'd her tender frame,
And soon, too soon, her lovely form became
A feast for worms ; without one moment giv'n,
To beg forgiveness, or prepare for Heav'n.

THY late admirers and *pretended* friends,
Who waited on thy smiles for different ends,

E 2

Where

* Prov. xv. 29. Deut. xxxi. 17. Trust not to a *death-bed* repentance, lest being deprived of reason by the violence of disorders, you are entirely prevented from improving your *latter* moments, and rush into an awful eternity unprepared.

Where are they now! O *Zephalinda*, say?
 For ever fled;—the well proportion'd clay
 To dust returning, charms the sight no more;
 The pleasing farce, the golden dream is o'er,
 While the poor soul neglected takes her flight,
 To doleful regions of *eternal* night.*
 Learn hence, ye lively and engaging Fair,
 To make your *minds* your chief, your only care;
 For death, ere long, will close the brightest eyes (t)
 But *Virtue*, heav'n-born *Virtue*, never dies. (a)

WHILST noon prevails I'll seek the neighb'ring
 grove,
 There coolly shaded unmolested rove,
 Thro' devious walks and bowery mazes stray,
 'Till Sol declining sheds a milder day; (n) These

* Matt. viii. 12.

(t) Psalm lxxxix. 4. Psalm xlix. 14. Prov. xxxi. 30.

Beauty like a flower soon fades; be concerned then, ye
 virgins, like *Marcia*, to improve your charms with inward
 greatness, unaffected wisdom, and sanctity of manners

Addison's Cato.

(a) Be mental charms your never-fading bloom,
 Internal beauty will survive the tomb.

(n) 'Tis pleasing thus
 To wander thoughtful thro' the sylvan grove,
 At fragrant morn, scorch'd noon, or dewy eve.
Brown's Sunday Thoughts.

These calm retreats my contemplation aid,
 Here lofty trees afford a pleasing shade, (v)
 And fragrant wild-flow'rs disregarded bloom,
 While birds unnotic'd warble thro' the gloom.
 Along the center glides a purling stream,
 Whose gentle murmurs well deserve my theme ;
 Its flowery banks compose a rural seat,
 In shades surrounded, and secur'd from heat ;
 Here the sad lover oft repairs alone,
 When evening comes to make his plaintive moan,
 Or pensive wanders thro' the lonely meads,
 Which way his melancholy temper leads ;
 On every tree he carves the much-lov'd name,
 And idly calls them to attest his flame ;
 While jealous thoughts their poison swift impart,
 And scenes of horrid rivals rend his aching heart.

O may the SAVIOUR'S image, deep imprest,
 By the good Spirit, warm the reader's breast ;
 Inspire his soul with love beyond compare,
 And make him jealous of a rival there.*

E 3

As

(v) Still let me pierce into the midnight depth
 Of yonder grove, of wildest, largest growth ;
 That forming high in air, a woodland quire
 Nods o'er the mount beneath.

Thomson.

* We cannot be too jealous of our thoughts, words or actions, knowing we have to do with a *jealous* GOD, who will take vengeance on them who know him not, and obey not the gospel of his son. Exod. xx. 4, 5. Heb. x. 30.

As ent'ring Nature's Fane, it leads my soul,
To the great Architect who form'd the whole ;
Whose mighty hand this verdant fabric rais'd,
Thro' ev'ry nation may His name be prais'd.

On either side the black'ning shades increase, }
Be hush'd my fears, ye fancy'd horrors cease ; }
This sylvan temple is th' abode of peace.*
Here aged oaks appear in various rows,
There stately elms a verdant arch compose ;
Whose spreading branches intermixt on high,
Prevent the sun-beams and obscure the sky.
Here the sweet songsters of the grove repair,
To shun the heat and nurse their tender care ;
Or crows in *rural* architecture skill'd,
Their pendant nurs'ries near each other build. (a)
Whilst far beneath, the bees assiduous roam,
Anxious to bear their waxen treasures home ;
And from each flow'r extract delicious juice,
By Nature taught for man's peculiar use. ‡
Hence,

* At every step
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fall,
And all is awful list'ning gloom around. Thomson.

(a) Who high amidst the boughs
In early spring, his airy city/builds. Thomson.

‡ How doth the little busy bee,
Improve each shining hour ;
And gather honey all the day,
From every opening flower. Dr. Watts.

Hence, sluggard, learn, bid indolence away,
 Redeem the time, improve the *present* day ;
 Another morn may never rise to thee,
 For on *each* moment hangs eternity. (n)

IN woods and groves the patriarchs retir'd, (v)
 To worship GOD with holy zeal inspir'd ; (x)
 In such retreats the hermit spends his days,
 In heavenly contemplation, pray'r and praise ;
 And liv'd on nature's common, free from care,
 His drink the spring, wild fruits his daily fare. *

HERE let me oft enjoy the cooling breeze,
 From noon defended by umbrageous trees ;
 The pleasing gloom invites to solemn thought,
 Calls off the mind with vain ideas fraught,
 To Him, who all things out of nothing brought. (t) }
 GOD

(n) Matt. xxv. 13.

(v) Gen. xxi. 33.

(x) Thus liv'd the patriarchal age of old,
 Kings of the verdant plain and fleecy fold. *Brown.*

* Far in a world, unknown to public view,
 From youth to age a reverend *Hermit* grew ;
 The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
 His food the fruits, his drink the chrystal well ;
 Remote from man, with GOD he past his days,
 Pray'r all his business, all his pleasure praise.
Parnell's Hermit,

(t) Col. i. 16.

GOD of my life ! whose every word's a law,
Impress my soul with reverential awe ;
O Thou ! array'd in robes of glorious light,
Ineffable,—assist my tow'ring flight ;
Fain would I soar above *terrestrial* things,
And sing of Thee, Almighty King of kings !
Here in this grove approve my humble lays,
Forgive my failings, and accept my praise.

HAIL, Lord of Heav'n and earth ! by all rever'd,
By saints surrounded, and by devils fear'd ; (a)
To whom the bright and spotless seraphs bend,
And round the throne thy great behests attend ;
At whose dread footstool angels bow the knee,
In deep prostration to the sacred *Three* ; *
JEHOVAH infinite ! who reigns on high,
In mercy hear a trembling sinner's cry.

THOU bid'st the sun his chearing beams display,
Thou also mad'st the night, and Thou the day.
Sea, earth, air, heav'n, Thy boundless wisdom show,
Thy gracious will returning seasons know ; †

At

(a) James ii. 19.

Jude 14.

* *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.* 1 John v. 7.

† Dan. ii. 21.

At Thy command the fields are cloth'd with
corn, (1)

And spreading leaves the lofty trees adorn ;
The woods and groves with waving honors crown'd,
Display Thy goodness ; whilst the birds resound
From every bough Thy praise, all Nature's God !
Thou great first Cause ! whose sin avenging rod,
Shook o'er a guilty world ere long shall prove,
The just revenger of thy slighted love. (a)

O haste the blessed time, Thou great Supreme !
When true religion like a mighty stream, (n)
Shall overflow this highly-favour'd land,
Blest with the choicest blessings of thine hand.
Engage our hearts to fear thy sacred name,
With gospel ardour every soul inflame ; *
And may thy church and people here below,
As Leb'non flourish, and as cedars grow ;

In

(1) Joel ii. 19.

Ps. cxlv. 15.

(a) Isai. xi. 4.

(n) Amos v. 24.

* Shine, mighty God, on Britain shine,
With beams of heav'nly grace ;
Reveal thy pow'r thro' all her coasts,
And shew thy smiling face.
Amidst our isle exalted high,
Do Thou our glory stand :
And like a wall of guardian fire,
Surround our fav'rite land.

Dr. Watts.

In grace increasing daily more and more,
Like sands for number on the ocean's shore.

GIVE to the King thy mighty judgments,
LORD! *

Long may he reign according to thy word ;
The Queen his royal consort truly bless,
(Give to their sons and daughters, righteousness)
May they the hearts of all their subjects gain,
And peace with plenty crown their happy reign.
Make, gracious GOD, their officers of state
As truly *good* as thou hast made them *great* ;
Teach them to have (and that alone pursue)
The *real* interest of the land in view. †

MAY young and old, the wealthy and the poor,
Thy favour, LORD ! be earnest to secure ;
May those who preach thy word rejoice to see
Their labours blest, while thousands flock to Thee ;
May all who do the name of Christian bear,
Shew by their *lives* they *real* Christians are ;
May growing vice, subdu'd by grace, decay,
And reign no more with arbitrary sway ;

May

* Psalms lxxii. 1.

† The necessity for this petition to be daily used, will be readily allowed by every *disinterested* well-wisher to Great-Britain.

May virtue long to all her gifts impart,
And love to God prevail in every heart ; (a)
Grant we may still thy chosen people be,
And after death for ever reign with thee. (n)

Let

(a) The author will not pretend to say, whether the *present* age is worse or better than former times ; but submits it to be determined by the thinking and religious, whether (from the sensuality and dissipation so prevalent among all ranks and degrees of men, and the lukewarmness, inattention, and immorality of even those who call themselves *Christians*, in this land of gospel privileges) there is not as much, if not more, occasion than ever to adopt the above petitions for a speedy and general reformation of manners.

(n) The Christian, as a loyal subject and good citizen, is bound to pray for the welfare and prosperity of that nation of which he is a part ; indeed the sacred writings not only point out this to be his indispensable duty, but direct him in his petitions, to make use of the following :

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son : establish thou his throne in righteousness. Ps. lxxii. 1.

Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just ; then shall the nation yield her increase, and God, even our own God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. Ps. vii. 9.

Cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land, and turn to the people a pure language, that they may call on the name of the Lord. Zec. xiii. 2.

Let peace be within our walls, and prosperity within our palaces.

Ps. cxxii. 27.

Let strife and discord thro' the nation cease,
And *temp'ral* prove an earnest of *eternal* peace. *

THUS shall thy glorious Name be known,
And be by all ador'd ;
Whilst ev'ry kingdom joins to own
Thee, universal LORD.

* This general prayer for the nation at large, may, with the greatest propriety, be adopted by every individual, and daily offered up to the throne of that God, by whom alone *kings reign, and princes decree justice.*

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN

OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK III.

If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam; the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

Par. Lett.

F

THE ARGUMENT.

THE afternoon described; bathing, with some reflections applicable to youth; an affecting story; an address to Heaven for the rising generation; Richmond-hill, with the prospects around it; address to the favourites of fortune; the pleasures of religion; an allegorical prayer; the evening's approach; time of walking; self-examination recommended; a summer's evening described; sun-set; night; darkness, an emblem of a guilty soul in despair; Altamont, a libertine; his death; virtue its own reward; the silence of the night represents the tranquillity of a dying Christian; the life and death of *Theron*, a true believer; the happiest men are such who act their several parts best on the stage of life.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.
BOOK III.

The Time—Evening.

Vita hominum, levis umbra et vapor. James iv. 14.

WITH raging noon the sultry hours are fled,
And milder beams a softer influence shed ;
The birds again fly warbling thro' the air,
And hinds awake, to different toils repair ;
The angler hastens with renew'd delight,
To throw the line and wait the pleasing bite ;
The neighb'ring flocks no longer pant with heat,
But gently rising leave their cool retreat,
While distant mountains echo bleat for bleat. *

F 2

THE

-
- * 'Tis beauty all, and grateful song around,
Join'd to the low of kine, and numerous bleats
Of flocks thick nibbling thro' the clover'd vale.

Thomson's Summer.

The

THE rural swain now seeks the well-known
 pool,
 Whose banks are shady, and whose water's cool ;
 There pleas'd, he wades along the yielding plain,
 Health strings his nerves and runs thro' ev'ry vein ;
 Surrounding bushes hide him from the sight,
 While trees umbrageous scarce admit the light.
 In yonder brook thus have I bath'd unseen ;
 Where bending willows form a verdant screen ;
 Preserv'd, O GOD ! by thine almighty arm,
 Which saves in danger and secures from harm :
 Upholds in sickness and supports in grief,
 In ev'ry trouble gives a sure relief ;
 Which shall at last my staff of comfort prove,
 And bear my soul thro' grace,* to realms of love. (1)

As some poor thoughtless youth, unlearnt in sin,
 When strong unruly passions rage within :

While

The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.

Milton.

* Rom. viii. 38, 39. A true Christian is warranted by
 scripture to hope for salvation thro' the merits and mediation
 of a once crucified but now exalted LORD. Rom. xviii. 34.

(1) Heaven is all love ; all joy in giving joy.

Dr. Young.

(Whilst pleasure courts him with her syren smiles,
 And vice ensnares him with her treach'rous wiles; (a)
 Is check'd at first by modest-blushing shame,
 And inexperience'd trembles at the name; †
 In doubt and fear he slowly goes astray,
 Till conscience harden'd he forgets to pray,
 And every good impression sins away. *

}

So on the margin of the brook I stand,
 But half resolv'd to quit the safer land;
 Shriv'ring awhile th' inverted landscape view,
 And undetermin'd know not which to do;
 At length by slow degrees I leave the shore,
 And plunging headlong, fear the depth no more.

Hence early learn to banish from within,
 The *first* tho' *small* appearances of sin; ||

F 3

Far

(a) Prov. vii. 21, 22, 23.

† Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
 As to be hated, need but to be seen;
 But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Pope.

* John xii. 40.

Matt. xiii. 15.

|| Youth can never be too cautious of sinful compliances
 at their first setting out in life; a great deal depends on what
company they keep, and what *pleasures* they pursue.

Far from thy breast thy darling vice remove,
 Shun bad companions, lest they fatal prove ; (a)
 Dare not to parley with th' infernal foe,
 Nor think no farther but thus far to go ; (n)
 Of this deceit, young man, in time beware,
 For 'tis in youth, too oft a fatal snare,
 " He that once sins, like him who slides on ice,
 " Goes swiftly down the slipp'ry paths of vice ;
 " Tho' conscience checks him, yet, those rubs got o'er,
 " He sins securely and looks back no more.
 " Ill habits gather by unseen degrees,
 " As brooks make rivers, rivers swell to seas." *

CLEANDER thus, that noble, gen'rous youth,
 Was first deluded to forsake the truth ;
 Then wild associates robb'd his tender mind,
 Of all impressions of a virtuous kind ;
 The sabbath day with these he would profane,
 While drunkenness and harlots prov'd his bane. (a)
 His

(a) 1 Cor. v. 11. (n) Prov. iv. 14, 15. Chap. vii. 27, 28.

* Remember, my young contemporaries, no one ever became abandoned all at once, but many have had great cause to rue their first deviations from the paths of virtue and sobriety.

(a) Sabbath-breaking, debauchery, and wine, have been confessed by numbers of unhappy young men, the first and principal reasons of their coming to an untimely end.

His pious father view'd him with concern,
 And often weeping begg'd him to return ;
 But vice too sadly reign'd in every part, (*n*)
 Which quickly broke a sorrowing mother's heart ;
 Who thus in tears th' unhappy youth address,

" Attend, *Cleander*, to my *last* request ;

" Before too late forsake your evil ways,

" For they have shorten'd your poor mother's
 days : *

" O might I live to see my darling son

" Incline to virtue (but God's will be done)

" In songs of praise I'd spend my latest breath,

" And trusting in my SAVIOUR, *welcome* death.

" LORD ! grant whene'er I leave this world of
 strife,

" My death may prove my son's eternal life."

Then overcome with grief, she turn'd aside,

And just was heard to say, *farewell*, and died.

'T WAS

(*n*) To deliberate with sin, is like a moth flying about a candle, which it seldom, if ever, does long, without being burnt.

* If parents would be more solicitous for the good morals of their children, and concerned to establish their tender minds in the love and practice of religion and virtue, by a pious *example* and *admonitions*, they might hope on good grounds to be well rewarded for their trouble, in beholding the happy effects of such an education, in the sober lives and conduct of their offspring. Prov. xxii. 6.

'Twas now too late, the lost *Cleander* found
 His hopes in vain to heal the fatal wound,
 Which sin had made within his tainted breast,
 By vice polluted and with crimes oppress'd ;
 The thoughtless youth, too harden'd to amend,
 And through imprudence left by ev'ry friend ;
 Soon met a just, but ignominious end. }

THUS Satan triumphs when he brings the soul
 From *smaller* crimes, (*a*) to sin without controul ;
 The young and gay by tempting pleasures won
 To seek the company they ought to shun,
 Are first deluded, and are then undone. * }

PROFITIOUS Heav'n, in mercy deign to smile,
 On ev'ry youth of Britain's happy isle ;
 O may their tender hearts to good incline,
 Grow as the corn and flourish as the vine ;
 When hell attempts to make them go astray,
 Prevent their wand'ring ; guide their early way ;
 Direct their steps to virtue's blest abode,
 And may Religion lead their souls to God.

Now

(*a*) *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus.* Heb. iii. 13.

* 'Tis much easier to shun vice before it is practised, than afterwards to relinquish it ; this many have *fatally* experienced.

Now let me soar on fancy's eagle wing,
 And in more rural numbers strive to sing
 Thy beauties, *Richmond*, and thy green retreats,
 "At once the monarch's and the muse's seats ;"
 Whose lofty hill commands on ev'ry side,
 A view of Nature in her sylvan pride. (a)
 Here verdant fields and flowery meadows rise,
 Their azure mountains seem to touch the skies ;
 Whilst far beyond, the Thames meand'ring flows,
 Whose silver stream a Heav'n inverted shows ;
 And as it gently glides, on either hand,
 Dispenses blessings thro' our favour'd land.

Thus for the poor, the starving and distressed,
 May charity abound in every breast ; *
 And genuine godliness without controul,
 Flow like this stream, and spread thro' ev'ry soul.

Ye *fortune's* fav'rites, who abound in wealth,
 And ye *more* blest, enjoying constant health ;
 Let this your *chief*, your *greatest* pleasure be,
 Relieving those who claim your sympathy ;

And

(a) See the description of Richmond-hill in Thomson's
Summer, line 1406.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 8.

And shew your gratitude for mercies giv'n,
By charity to men and thanks to Heav'n. (a)

WHAT beaut'ous landscapes all around appear,
Drest in the liv'ry of the smiling year!
Where'er I turn my eager wand'ring eyes,
New scenes delight me and new prospects rise:
On yonder spot majestic *Windsor's* seen,
Whose stately forest, deck'd in chearful green,
Shall ever flourish in immortal lays,
While *Pope's* harmonic numbers sound its praise.
The sister hills at distance I descry,*
There lofty *Harrow* lifts its spire on high: (a)
In every part fresh beauties rise in view,
The varied prospects still are ever new;
Like the sweet truths the sacred Scriptures yield,
On contemplation's mount, by faith reveal'd,
From which believers daily comfort gain,
A balm for ev'ry wound, a cure for ev'ry pain. (n)

SAY, happy Christian (for thou sure must know)
What inward pleasures from *Religion* flow?

Pleasures

(a) Ephes. v. 20. Col. iv. 17. 1 Cor. xiii.

* Highgate and Hampstead.

(a) Now to the sister hills that skirt her plain,
To lofty *Harrow* now, and now to where
Majestic *Windsor* lifts his princely brow. Thomson.

(n) 2 Peter i. 4. Romans viii. 17.

Pleasures as lasting as they're truly sweet,
The springs of joy unfading and compleat ; *
Bath worlds she freely promises to give,
To those who daily by her precepts live ;
This world with all things really good and great,
And life eternal in a *future* state. (v)

PLEAS'D with the scenes which all around
appear,
Fain would I have a peaceful dwelling here,
While genial summer rules the changing year ;
Far from the town, remote from noise and strife,
Here let me live a quiet *country* life ; (e)
Be this delightful hill my calm abode,
To study nature, (a) and converse with GOD. (n)
Here,

* Psalms xvi. 11.

(v) 1 Tim. iv. 8. vi. 6.

(c) O far from cities my abode remove,
To realms of innocence, and peace and love.
.
.
.
And if unblam'd my fond desires might plead,
A little cottage on a lonely mead
Should be my choice. *Browne on the Universe.*

(d) O quickly bear me hence,
To wholesome *solitude*, the nurse of sense ;
Where contemplation prunes her ruffled wings,
And the freed soul looks down to pity kings. *Pope.*

(n) That rural solitude and the calm recesses of the country, are

Here, while the pleasing landscapes I survey,
 Which court my fancy and invite my stay ;
 Hills, vallies, meads, and yonder winding stream,
 The rural subjects of my present theme,
 O may my thoughts (as trees shoot upwards) rise,
 Above the region of these lower skies, *
 And dwell on things celestial and divine,
 Whilst pure devotion runs thro' every line.

PARENT of *Nature* ! all creation's LORD !
 Who form'd the heavens by thy powerful word,
 And made the earth for man's peculiar care,
 The sea for fishes, and for birds the air,
 Who clothes the fields with grafs and ripening corn,
 The reader's mind with inward grace adorn,
 Thy sacred image on his heart impress,
 And clothe his soul in JESU's righteousness.
 As yonder hills appear to meet the sky,
 May his affections thus ascend on high ;
 And rais'd by grace on wings of faith and love,
 Tho' here below, appear to live above ;
 While pressing forward in his *christian* course,
 (Like yonder river halt'ning to its source †)

Do

are assistant to devotion, may be learned from the primitive
 Christians having oratories or prayer houses built in such
 retreats.

Bennet's Christian Oratory.

* Colossians iii. 2.

† The Thames.

Do thou, O GOD! his help and shield appear;
 And as a plenteous harvest crowns the year,
 May sure success on all his dealings wait,
 And bliss his portion in a *future* state.

BUT lo! the sun is hast'ning to the west,
 In all the grandeur of a monarch drest;
 Now is the time to walk the neighb'ring fields,
 While every breeze refreshing coolness yields; *
 To seek the plains or thro' the meadows stray,
 While yon bright orb emits a fainter ray,
 And length'ning shades proclaim declining
 day. (1)

G

THUS

* Now, the long labour of the day forgot,
 Homeward the ploughman drives his weary team;
 Gay shines the window of the village cot,
 Reflecting bright the sun's departing beam.
 I leave, with eager joy and gladd'ning haste,
 The busy town to lux'ry and to care;
 In neighb'ring groves, and flowery fields, to taste
 Th' untainted gale, and breathe a purer air.

(1) The approach of night,
 The skies yet blushing with departing light,
 When falling dews with spangles deck the glade,
 And the low sun had lengthen'd every shade. *Pope.*

Now the day wears, the sun-beams faintly bound,
 And taller shadows stretch along the ground.

Blackmore.

THUS life, with all its joys, when death is near,
Will but a lengthen'd shade at *best* appear,*
To an *eternity* of bliss or woe,
To which the unimbodied soul must go ;
For after death *two* states *alone* remain
Of endless *pleasure*, and eternal *pain* (a)

THEN ask thyself, nor think the questions
strange,
Am I prepar'd to meet the awful change? †
Have I believ'd in CHRIST, the sinner's friend?
Do I on Him or on *myself* depend?
Have I acknowledg'd GOD in all my ways? (n)
In ev'ry word and action liv'd his praise?
Is sin my hatred, godliness my aim?
Am I in *life* a Christian as in name?
Do I adorn the doctrines I believe?
Or by hypocrisy my soul deceive? (v)

How

* 1 Chro. xxix. 15. (a) Matt. xxv. 46. Dan. xii. 2.
John v. 29.

† Self-examination is a duty highly necessary, useful, and important, for every one to attend to, who wishes to know how matters really stand between God and his soul.

(n) Prov. iii. 6.

(v) Matt. xvi. 26. Chap. xxvi. 51.

Seeming devotion does but gild a knave,
That's neither faithful, honest, just, nor brave;
But where religion does with virtue join,
It makes an hero like an angel shine.

Waller.

How have my fleeting hours been daily spent ?
 In every station have I learnt content ?
 What *solid* ground have I to hope, at last,
 God will forgive my sins and follies past ? †
 Let every reader thus without delay,
 With self-examination close each day. *

G 2

Is

† *Evening Reflections* proper for Christians of all denominations.—Another of my days is now irrecoverably gone ! Think, O my soul ! how soon all the schemes and cares, hopes and fears, pleasures, joys and sorrows of the present life, will come to their eternal period. Think how soon thou wilt be fixt in a state of everlasting happiness or misery. To-morrow's sun may not enlighten *mine* eyes, but only shine upon a breathless corpse ; this sudden, this awful change has past on one and another of my acquaintance, and who knows but *I* may be the next ?—and now, O my soul ! answer as in the sight of the omniscient and ever present God, art thou ready to appear before him in judgment ? is there no sin unforsaken and so unrepented of, to fill me with anguish in my departing moments ? and cause me to tremble on the brink of the eternal world ? Let me renew my most earnest applications to the throne of divine grace for deliverance therefrom, through Jesus Christ, the friend of publicans and sinners ; that if this night should be my *last*, it may terminate in a glorious and never-ending day.

- * Nor let soft slumber close thine eyes,
 Before you've recollected thrice,
 The train of actions thro' the day,
 Where have my feet chose out their way ?
 What have I learnt where'er I've been ?
 From all I've heard, from all I've seen ?
 What know I more that's worth the knowing ?
 What have I done that's worth the doing ?

What

Is life a shadow ? are our days a span ?
 What then is frail and feeble creature man ?
 A worm of earth, whose race will soon be o'er,
 Alive to-day, to-morrow seen no more. (a)
 That *time* is short, the scriptures oft declare,
 Then for *eternity* let all prepare ;
 Our length'ning years (like ev'ning shades) portend,
 The day of our existence near its end ;
 Improve the present moments ere they fly,
 None are too old to mend, or young to die. *

THE air serene invites the chearful swain,
 From daily toil to seek the verdant plain,
 There join'd by neighb'ring youths, in harmless
 play
 And rural games, to spend the falling day.
 Now gloomy woods or pathless meadows prove,
 The lonely haunts of solitary love ; (n)

While

What have I sought that I should shun ?
 Or into what new follies run ?
 What duties have I left undone ?
 These self-enquiries are the road,
 That lead to virtue and to God.

Watts's Improvement of the Mind.

(a) Job xiv. 1, 2, 12. * Eccles. xi. 9, 10. Chap. xii. 1.

(n) Now from the world,
 Sacred to sweet retirement lovers steal,

To

While evening draws her shadowy curtains round,
And in her sable liv'ry, clothes the dusky ground. (1)

As now declines the splendid orb of day,
The *western* clouds a beauteous scene display,*
Some cloath'd in purple, others ting'd with gold,
Whose various shapes romantic views unfold ;
Here edg'd with crimson fleecy waves appear,
There blushing ruins deck the ruddy sphere,
While hills on hills to mimic fancy rise,
And *rural* landscapes paint the glowing skies ; (a)

G 3

'Till

To glimmering shades and sympathetic glooms,
Where the dun umbrage o'er the falling stream
Romantic hangs, there thro' the pensive dusk
Strays, in heart-thrilling meditation lost,
Indulging all to love.

Thomson.

(1) Now came still evening on, and twilight grey,
Had in her sable liv'ry all things clad.

Milton.

Now lab'ring oxen, spent with toil and heat,
In their loose traces from the field retreat ;
While curling smokes from village tops are seen,
And the fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green. Pope.

* The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train
In all their pomp, attend his setting throne.

Thomson.

(a) His rays play upward, in the fleecy clouds,
That swiftly pencil'd dress a mimic scene
In Fancy's eye, of groves and whiten'd Alps,
And towers romantic, rear'd complete or waste

In

'Till with the setting sun's diverging rays,
The pleasing prospect into smoke decays.

Now to the woods the tuneful birds repair,
And lull'd to sleep their warbling songs forbear ;
Home from the meads return the weary swains, }
While flocks and herds lie slumb'ring on the plains, }
And thro' the fields a solemn silence reigns. (n) }
Now chilling dews lament departing light, }
And distant prospects vanish from the light, }
While sober evening yields the world to *night*. }

As silent darkness spreads her black'ning veil,
O'er meadows, hills, and every verdant dale ;
'The varied scene around me gradual fades,
And all creation's wrapt in deep'ning shades ;*

So

In ruin'd majesty, with interspace
Of golden Ether and Elysian plain.

Browne's Sunday Thoughts.

The evening now with blushes warms the air,
The steer resigns his yoke, the hind his care ;
The clouds aloft with golden edges glow,
And falling dews refresh the flow'rs below. *Garth.*

(n) Now the still night with peaceful poppies crown'd,
Wide spreads her shady pinions o'er the ground. *Garth.*

* *Night*, sable goddess ! from her ebony throne,
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world. *Young.*

So when sharp pains the night of death declare,
The sinner's often whelm'd in dark despair ;
And as the shades conceal each pleasing view,
Distressing doubts and fears his hopes subdue ;
Alarm his conscience, raise an inward strife,
Increase his horrors and but end with life. (a)

THUS died poor *Altamont*, the young and brave,
Estrang'd to virtue, and to vice a slave ;
Who early fell (thro' passion's conqu'ring wiles)
A hapless victim to a *harlot's* smiles. (n)
In taste a libertine, in temper gay,
Immers'd in pleasures, and to lust a prey ;
Deaf to advice, foe to *himself* alone,*
In actions headstrong, and to folly prone ;
Thoughtless of God and of a future state,
Thus unprepar'd he met his wretched fate.

HIS

(a) See the death of Francis Spira.

(n) Prov. v. 5th to the 11th verse.

* Tho' the example of vicious men may be (and too often is) fatal to those around them, yet they must be reckoned by the Christian (while persisting in the ways of sin) fighting principally against *themselves*, and in the end will be found the greatest enemies of their own souls. The vices of some men, hurt none but those who practise them.

His *handsome* person was his greatest snare,
 This made him court, and courted by the Fair ; (a)
 Fond of intrigue, he was at heart a rake,
 Wont to deceive, then ruin, then forsake ;
 A fatal wound one evening prov'd his end,
 The cause of vice endeavouring to defend ;
 Three hours he linger'd in the greatest pain,
 While every art was try'd, but try'd in vain.

O say, what words his fear of death could tell,
 When fill'd with dread he cry'd, "*I'm doom'd to
 hell ;*
 " To live with devils in eternal woe,*
 " Without one gleam of hope, for God's my foe. (a)
 " I'm

(a) Beauty is a greater snare in both sexes than is generally imagined, and more dangerous than the possessors of it are aware of ; and never appears *truly* amiable to the discerning part of mankind, but when it is accompanied with *virtue, prudence, and humility.*

* However the young and gay may spend their hours in the eager pursuit of fashionable amusements and unlawful pleasures, regardless of an hereafter ; let sickness, pain, or the terrors of death overtake them, and they will be taught their folly, and wish to be forgiven (it may be) too late.

(a) *I will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh.* Prov. i. 26, 27, 28.

" I'm lost for ever ; whither shall I fly ?
 " I want a Saviour, but no friend is nigh ;"
 Then breath'd his last, unfit to live or die.†
 From such examples let the living know,
 " Virtue alone is happiness below ;"
 Vice its own punishment will ever prove ;
 Religion only, leads to realms above.

SILENT as nature overspread with shades,
 While not a sound the list'ning ear invades (n)
 Still

† The dying moments of a profligate are finely depicted in a poem entitled the *Grave*, by *Robert Blair*.

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
 Raves round the walls of her clay tenement !
 Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help,
 But shrieks in vain ;--how wishfully she looks
 On all she's leaving ! now no longer her's.
 A little longer, yet a little longer,
 Oh ! might she stay to wash away her crimes,
 And fit her for her passage ;—mournful sight !
 Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan
 She heaves is big with horror ; but the foe,
 Like a staunch murd'rer steady to his purpose,
 Pursues her close thro' every lane of life,
 Nor misses once the track, but presses on,
 'Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
 At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

(n) Silence, how dead ! and darkness how profound !
 Nor eye nor list'ning ear an object finds ;
 Creation sleeps.

.
 Ev'n silent night proclaims my soul immortal,
 Ev'n silent night proclaims eternal day.

Young.

Still as creation in the depth of night,
 (When ghastly dreams the guilty soul afflict.)
 So true believers calmly finish life,
 Unknown to trouble, free from inward strife;
 Thus well assur'd whatever is, is *best*. (v)
 They die in peace and enter into rest. (x)
 So may'st thou tread death's gloomy cypress vale,
 By *faith* supported all its terrors hail;*
 And ripe for heav'n, leave every comfort here,
 Without a sigh, a murmur, or a tear.†

Thus happy *Theron* late resign'd his breath,
 First gave his soul to GOD, then welcom'd death; ‡
 Long

(v) Rom. viii. 28. (x) Is. xxvi. 3. Rev. xiv. 13.

* Heb. xi. 1.

† His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
 And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl. Young.

‡ With joy the hind, his daily labour done,
 Sees the broad shadows and the setting sun;
 With joy the sailor, long by tempests tost,
 Spreads all his canvas for the wish'd-for coast;
 With joy the slave, worn out with tedious woes,
 Beholds the hand which liberty bestows;
 With joy the warrior on the hostile plain,
 His wounds forgetting, does a vict'ry gain;
 So death with joy my feeble voice shall greet,
 My hand shall beckon and my wishes meet.

Solitary Walks.

Long did he walk in true Religion's ways,
 His works were charity,* his words were praise;
 His

* The term Charity is generally used in a vague and indeterminate sense, sometimes denoting the cause, and sometimes the effect; as the cause, referring to that disposition of mind which prompts and excites the agent to sympathize with, and to partake of the joys and sorrows of another; in this view it seems closely connected with the idea of *Affection*; as the effect, Charity is usually meant to indicate an attempt to alleviate the distresses of others; and herein it seems nearly allied to active *Benevolence*. Certainly it were better if both these branches of Charity were always united: that the sympathizing mind did always direct and invigorate the bestowing hand, especially to the relief of deserving objects, and in such particulars as justify the donation.

To contribute to satisfy the *superfluous* wants of any one, is not Charity; neither is it Charity to support, from the funds of honourable industry, dishonourable idleness; or to render beggary a gainful profession, and the refusal of employment more lucrative than diligent occupations; a proper discrimination of the objects to whom charity is extended, cannot be too scrupulously attended to; lest by exercising liberality without distinction, we should (tho' undesignedly) encourage vice.

Confined to no nation or climate, to no sect or party, to no class or description, to no modes or manners, may the benevolent principles and the active munificence of this ennobling virtue universally prevail. Wherever there are any of the human race needing the assistance of their fellow creatures; wherever by the vicissitudes of this sickle world there are some high and others low; some in pain, others in pleasure; some in distress, others in joy---may those in joy pity those in distress; those in pleasure sympathize with those in pain; those who are high condescend to those of low estate; and every one capable of yielding aid, cheerfully assist those whose necessities require it; in conformity to that truly benevolent and humane idea,

Homo sum; humanum nihil a me alienum puto.

His actions virtuous, godliness his aim,
 His only glory was in JESU'S name ; ||
 Of temper chearful, of a generous mind,
 Friend to the wretched, to the needy kind ;
 Just in his dealings, upright and sincere,
 To vice a stranger, and from folly clear ;
 The Scriptures were his true unerring guide ; *
 Thus as a real Christian liv'd and dy'd ;
 And now I doubt not, dwells with saints above,
 In blisful realms of everlasting love. (a)

Hence, reader, lay this truth to heart,
 Not he who acts the *greatest* part,
 But he who acts the *best*, will be
 The happiest man eternally. (n)

|| Galatians vi. 14.

* Search the scriptures, saith the divine sum and substance of them, for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me. John v. 39.

(a) Matt. xxv. 46.

(n) Acts x. 34, 35. Deut. x. 17. 1 Pet. i. 17.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK IV.

Night is fair *Virtue's* immemorial friend ;
The conscious moon thro' every distant age,
Has held a lamp to wisdom. *Night Thoughts.*

H

THE ARGUMENT.

MOONLIGHT described; Ghosts, the time of their appearance, their existence chiefly ideal; permitted only upon some extraordinary occasions; an address to Contemplation; the nightingale, night's lone musician; the moon an emblem of faith; life a dream; the value of blessings known by their loss; the great Creator of heaven and earth the believer's guide and defence; a comfortable thought under affliction; the necessity of early repentance urg'd from the consideration of the uncertainty of life, and certainty of death; night ending in day; afflictions the way to glory, a strong argument for resignation and contentment under divine dispensations; the clock striking; its address to man; night useful as day; troubles necessary as health; conclusion.

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN
OR, THE
PLEASURES OF RELIGION.

BOOK IV.

The Time—Night.

Nox regnat
Somnus reficit languida membra.

BEHOLD! to sooth the rugged brow of night,
The moon arising yields a silver light, *
And twinkling stars unnumber'd deck the sphere, †
While rural scenes in shadowy robes appear.

H 2

Now

* Now reigns
Full orb'd, the moon, and with more pleasing light,
Shadowy sets off the face of things. *Milton.*

† Gentle night! whose modest maiden beams
Give us a new creation, and present
The world's great picture soften'd to the sight;
Nay kinder far, far more indulgent still,

Thou

Now is the time when restless ghosts are said
 'To haunt the tombs or stalk along the glade,
 Or seek the ruins of some mould'ring tow'r,
 Where owls scream hideous thro' the midnight hour;
 But treat such notions with a just disdain,
 As mere delusions of a sickly brain.*

THO' 'tis confess'd that such appear'd of old,
 Some great momentous secret to unfold,
 By heav'n's command; on gracious errands sent,
 To clear the guiltless, or some guilt prevent:
 We're not to judge (as many do from hence)
 They visit earth on every light pretence;
 Oft at the chambers of the restless wait,
 As the appointed messengers of fate;
 Or in the ghastly vestments of the dead,
 Haunt the lone mansion, (1) or thro' meadows tread;
 And

Thou too, whose mild dominion's silver key
 Unlocks our hemisphere and sets to view
 Worlds beyond numbers, worlds conceal'd by day,
 Behind the proud and envious star of noon.

Young's Night Thoughts.

* As it is the chief concern of wise men, to retrench the evils of life by the reasonings of *religious* philosophy, so it is the employment of fools to increase them by the sentiments of idle superstition. *Spectator*, No. 7.

(1) The lonely tower
 Is also shunn'd, whose mournful chambers hold,
 So night-struck fancy dreams, the yelling ghost.

Thomson's Summer.

And nightly terrify the weary swain,
 (As home returning o'er the dewy plain)
 In various shapes as village stories tell,
 Such spectres only in the fancy dwell ; (a)
 Ideal ghosts, which but exist in thought,
 And haunt those heads alone, with idle whimsies
 fraught.*

WHILE some weak minds with apparitions
 teem, }
 And in their sleep of horrid phantoms dream, }
 Come, sacred *Contemplation* ! aid my theme;
 Help me to meditate JEHOVAH's praise,
 Whose wond'rous works demand my highest lays.

BUT hark ; what sounds my ravish'd ears delight,
 And charm the silence of the peaceful night, (a)

H 3

From

(a) Now the timorous imagination teems with phantoms,
 and creates numberless terrors to itself.

Hervey on Night.

* How happy is that man who can truly say, Je crain
 Dieu et je ne point d'autre crainte ; I fear God and none
 besides.

(a) All things are hush'd, as Nature's self lay dead,
 The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head ;
 The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
 And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dew sweat.

Dryden

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 The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
 And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night-dew sweat.

Dryden

From yonder grove ? (at noon my cool retreat,
 From rain a shelter, and a shade from heat.)
 'Tis the sweet nightingale's melodious strains,
 Night's *lone musician* ; warbler of the plains ; (n)
 Whose pleasing notes the shades of evening cheer,
 While genial Summer rules the changing year. (v)

So when the Christian's overwhelm'd with grief,
 Hope cheers his sorrows, yields a kind relief ;
 Softens his pains, and comfort will impart,
 While love to CHRIST possesses all his heart.

In solemn pomp the moon with borrow'd ray,
 Rides thro' the heav'ns, and sheds a softer day ;
 While fix'd and planetary orbs around,
 With living spangles deck the blue profound ;
 Majestic scene ! where worlds on worlds appear,
 And starry diamonds animate the sphere ; *
 (To

(n) The warbling bird
 Tunes sweetly her love-labour'd song.

(v) She all night long her am'rous descant sings,
 Trills her thick warbled notes the summer long.

* Lo ! all above the pure cœrulean height,
 Is spangled o'er with pendant orbs of light ;
 That seem like sparks to stud th' æthereal blue, *
 A train innum'rous to the wondering view. *Browne.*

The spacious firmament on high,
 With all the blue æthereal sky,

(To pilgrims oft a pleasing welcome fight,)
 And kindly dissipate the gloom of night. (a)
 So when the pious Christian, near his end,
 For strength and succour does on CHRIST de-
 pend;

True faith lights up the dreary vale of tears,
 His soul enlivens and becalms his fears,*
 Removes his doubts, and teaches him to sing,
 Where's grave, thy vict'ry? and where's death,
 thy sting?

While

And spangled heav'ns, a shining frame,
 Their great original proclaim.

Addison.

(a) As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
 O'er heav'n's clear azure spreads her sacred light;
 Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
 And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
 The conscious swains rejoicing in the sight,
 Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

Pope's Homer.

* Ephes. ii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. John xi. 25, 26.

As the moon receives her light from the sun, and will be
 of no service to us after death; so faith receives strength and
 vigour from the Sun of Righteousness, and at death will be
 turned into vision.

'Tis faith disarms destruction.

Young.

See Hervey on the Tombs.

While full of hope he hears the welcome call,
And thro' his SAVIOUR triumphs over all. (a)

THE *natural* man, by sin in darkness bound,
Does not receive the gospel's joyful sound,
With heart-felt pleasure and with true delight,
'Till (as the moon arising cheers the night)
Faith gives of JESUS an enlivening sight ;
Then every promise in the Scriptures sown,
He (by appropriation) makes his own,
And thro' the *Spirit's* teaching mounts on high,
Trusts in the LORD, and learns to live and die.*

THIS

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 55, 6, 7.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN'S FAREWELL.

Farewell my dearest friends, I must away,
Death calls me hence, I would no longer stay ;
Farewell my transient comforts here below,
CHRIST bids me welcome, to his Heav'n I go :
Farewell my sorrows, and adieu my grief,
To every trouble death's a kind relief ;
Farewell my fading joys, I go to prove
The endless pleasures of the saints above ;
Farewell my pains, be gone my rising fears,
In heav'n there's neither sorrow, grief, nor tears ;
All earthly happiness I now resign,
Vain world farewell, but welcome joys divine.

To die is gain. Phil. i. 21.

* John vi. 63. Rom. viii. 1, 5, 13, 14.

THIS life's a *dream* with all its transient joys, (1)
 Like airy bubbles blown by wanton boys,
 Whose various colours please their gazing eyes,
 But burst and vanish ere they're taught to rise ;
 Thus all our fleeting comforts here below,
 Which earth can give or heav'n itself bestow,
 Are but of short duration, quickly fade,
 By sickness blasted, or by grief decay'd ;
 By sorrows wither'd, or by death destroy'd,
 They're gone for ever, ere they're well enjoy'd ;
 Hence learn to fix your thoughts on things above,
 Make not *this* world the object of your love,*
 But dwell on joys eternal and divine, (a)
 And may those endless joys be ever thine.

THE

(1) James iv. 14. Job vii. 1, 6, 16. Chap. viii. 9.
 Ps. xc. 5, 6, 10. Ps. cii. 11. ciii. 15.

Life is a *dream*, and all things show it,
 I *thought* so once, but now I *know* it.

Gay.

The term *jest* I cannot but think highly improper here, and therefore would recommend, with the pious Dr. Watts, in his 17th Psalm, the sentiment, *Life is a dream*, &c. as we are one day to die in *earnest*, life should not be accounted a *jest*, because on time depends eternity.

* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. (a) Col. iii. 2, 3.

Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
 Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

Young.

THE greatest blessings giv'n us while on earth,
We're by their *loss* too often taught their *worth* ;
Thus in affliction, *health* is chiefly priz'd,
The dead esteem'd, who *living* were despis'd ;
And time, *most precious* time, recall'd in vain, (*n*)
While godliness (too late) is counted gain.

DELUDED mortal, flee the baits of sense,
Pursue not pleasure at your soul's expence ;
Think on the shortness of the present state,
Prepare in time to meet approaching fate,
For, Oh! the dang'rous folly, to be wise too
late.*

HEAF.

(n) Moments seize,
Heaven's on their wing ; a moment we may wish,
When worlds want wealth to buy ; bid day stand still,
Bid him drive back his car, recal, retake
Fate's hasty prey : implore him, reimport
The period past, revive the given hour.

Night Thoughts.

Lorenzo! O for yesterdays to come.

Night II.

* The *thought* of death alone the *fear* destroys;
A disaffection to that precious thought
Is more than midnight darkness on the soul,
Which sleeps beneath it, on a precipice,
Puff'd off by the first blast, and lost *forever*.

Dr. Young.

HEAR, for thy comfort, poor believing soul,
 O'er whom the waves of whelming sorrows roll ;
 The mighty GOD who made this ample sky,
 With all these num'rous pendant worlds on high,
 Is thy protector, and eternal friend,
 On whom thou may'st in every grief depend ;
 Who has declar'd thou shalt receive no ill,
 Without His knowledge, or against His will,
 And when afflictions shall his saints befall,
 Has promis'd graciously to hear their call. (a)

O then, thrice happy soul ! assuage thy grief,
 He will at all times be thy sure relief ;
 Thy GOD's thy glory who preserves thy ways,
 Strive thou to *live* as well as *speak* his praise.
 Still for thy further consolation know,
 The LORD for wisest ends appoints thee woe ;
 To wean thee from the world, thy patience prove,*
 To shew thy sonship and a father's love. (a)

WILL

(a) 1 Cor. x. 13. Matt. x. 30. Ps. xxxiv. 19.

* Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8, and 11th verses. 2 Cor. iv. 17.
 1 Peter i. 7. Job v. 17.

(a) Prov. iii. 11, 12. Rev. iii. 19.

Good when he gives, supremely good,
 Nor less when he denies ;
 E'en crosses from his sov'reign hand,
 Are blessings in disguise.

Hervey.

WILL life, with all our frail enjoyments here,
 But as a shadow or a dream appear?
 Is day far spent, and is the night at hand,
 Which neither youth nor riches can withstand?
 (That awful night of *death* which sets us free,
 When mortal puts on immortality. (*n*)
 That *dernier* sleep which ends our joys below,
 From which we wake to happiness or woe
 That knows no end?) Then strive without delay,
 To gain *eternal* life; work while 'tis *day*; (*v*)
Now is th' accepted time, receive the grace,
 In scripture offered to a guilty race; (*x*)
 Do what thou hast to do with all thy might,
 Lest this thy day should close in *endless* night; (*z*)
 Seek true repentance and religion prize,
 In youth, in manhood, and in age be wise.*

DOES one dread night of sure unerring fate,
 The young, the old, the rich, the poor await? (*a*)
 (When

(*n*) 1 Cor. xv. 63 Job xxx. 23. (*v*) John ix. 4.

(*x*) 2 Cor. vi. 2. Isa. xlix. 8. (*z*) Eccles. ix. 10.

* Rom. xvi. 19. Eph. v. 15, 16. Col. iv. 5.
 Prov. iii. 13, to the 17th verse.

(*a*) Numb. xvi. 29.

(When we must sleep, a sleep ne'er slept before,
 While fancy shall distress and please no more, (1) }
 But all our visionary dreams be o'er!)
 Then hear, ye youths, unthinking, vain and gay,
 "Who drink the spirit of the golden day;"
 Ye pleasure's vot'ries, and ye slaves of sense,
 By sin no longer dare Omnipotence;
 Think how uncertain's life, and death how sure,
 Take heed of *little* sins, (n) that fatal lure, }
 And know they're *nearest* danger, who are *most*
 secure. (v)

SURE as day ends in night, night ends in day,
 While morn arising drives the shades away;
 Let not the Christian under grief despair,
 But every pain with resignation bear;
 For thro' afflictions true believers rise,
 To realms of endless joy beyond the skies.*

I

Thus

(1) This alludes to *pleasing* or *frightful* dreams.

(n) No sin can be *little*, as every one is committed against the *Great GOD* of heaven and earth, and exposes us to great, yea, *eternal* punishment. Matthew xxv. 41. Daniel xii. 2.

(v) Most secure in their *own* opinions: for the danger of temptations overcoming the soul, arises from an inward (tho' false) persuasion of our *own* ability to withstand them.

* 2 Cor. iv. 17. Acts xiv. 22. Comfort and consolation can never be too often suggested to a troubled and desponding soul.

Isa. lxi. 1; 2, 3. Chap. xl. 1, 2.

Thus as the darkness ends, it *leads* to light,
 The finest day succeeds the *blackest* night ;
 Then, poor benighted soul, complain no more,
 But what thou can'st not understand, *adore*. (a)
 Is pain thy lot ? presume not to repine,
 To GOD thy soul and all concerns resign,
 For thou art His, and he is ever thine. (n) }

A few more sorrowing days, weeks, months or
 years,
 A few more painful struggles, groans and tears,
 And all thy conflicts, Christian, will be o'er,
 And sin and grief distress thy soul no more. *

WHILST here below, (expos'd to every snare
 Which hell contrives to make the soul despair,
 Surrounded daily by unnumber'd foes,
 And ever subject to the sharpest woes)

The

(a) The ways of Providence are dark and intricate,
 Our understanding searches them in vain. Addison.

(n) John xv. 16. 1 Cor. i. 27. Chap. iii. 22, 23.
 Jer. xxxi. 33. Chap. xxx. 22. Ps. lxxiii. 25.

* There is a rest prepar'd for the children of God ; an
eternal rest from sin, temptations, trouble, trials, and distress
 of every kind ; and a *glorious* rest with the saints in light,
 where all tears shall be wip'd away for ever from their eyes,
 and God in Christ be their everlasting portion. Heb. iv. 9.
 Rev. vii. 15, 16, 17.

The true believer has his lone abode,
 He often mourns his distance from his GOD ;
 To live is CHRIST, he owns, but this were vain,
 If death was not his *everlasting* gain :
 Oh ! how he longs to hear that kind decree,
 To get from earth, and all its troubles free,*
 And dwell thro' endless ages, LORD ! with Thee. }

BUT hark ! methinks I hear the bell strike *one*,
 The sound proclaims another day's begun ; (a)
 Time swiftly flies, improve the moments lent,
 Prepare for death, and husband each event ;
 Think not to trifle with the LORD most high,
 Who views thine actions with a *jealous* eye ; (n)
 Take heed of sleeping on enchanted ground,
 Dream not of happiness where ills abound ;
 But know, tho' man to fancy *here's* a slave,
 'Tis all reality beyond the grave. (v)

I 2

ARE

* Phil. i. 23.

Ps. xlii. 1, 2.

(a) The bell strikes one ; we take no note of time
 But as it flies ; to give it then a tongue
 Is wise in man.

Young.

(n) Exodus xx. v. Deut. xxxii. 21.

(v) Eccles. xi. 3. Habakk. ii. 3.

All, all on earth is *shadow*, all beyond
 Is *substance* ; the reverse is folly's creed :
 How solid all, where change shall be no more. Young.

ARE light and darkness necessary here,
 (Does night as useful as the day appear)
 So are afflictions, sickness, pain, and woe,
 As health and pleasure, while we dwell below ; (1)
 Then cease to murmur, poor desponding soul,
 O'er whom afflictions on afflictions roll ;
 Trust in the LORD, make him alone your stay,
 He'll give thee strength according to the day ; (n)
 Thy sure support and best physician prove,
 First *sanctify* afflictions, then remove ;
 And land thee safe at last in realms above.

HENCE learn what blessings on the Christian
 wait,
 Both in the present and a *future* state ; (x)
 The LORD's his GOD, his guardian, guide, and
 friend,
 Mercy and goodness on his steps attend ;
 Eternal

(1) The graces of the Christian, such as *faith, patience, humility, &c.* could never be exercised without trials and afflictions of one kind or another ; therefore David says, *It was good for me that I was afflicted.* Ps. cxix. 67, 71.

(n) Deut. xxxiii. 25.
 xiv. 2, 3.

(v) John xvii. 24. Chap.

(x) Prov. xi. 31. Chap. xii. 21, 22.

Eternal love his sun and shield appears, (2)
 In every danger to dispel his fears ; *
 His beacon † prove thro' life's tempestuous sea,
 And blissful portion in eternity. (a)

Do pleasures from *Religion* flow,
 Which only *real Christians* know ?
 Then let us all with one accord,
 Seek, honor, love, and fear the **LORD**.

(2) Psalm lxxxiv. 11. *For the LORD GOD is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

* God is our sun, he makes our day,
 God is our shield, he guards our way ;
 From all th' assaults of hell and sin,
 From foes without and foes within.
 All needful grace will God bestow,
 And crown that grace with glory too ;
 He gives us all things, and withholds
 No *real* good from upright souls.
 O God our king, whose sovereign sway
 The glorious hosts of heaven obey ;
 While from thy presence devils flee,
 Blest is the man that trusts in Thee. *Dr. Watts.*

† A beacon is a light, placed on an eminence to direct the mariner, give warning of an approaching enemy, and prevent shipwrecks.

(a) Is. lx. 19, 20. ¶ Rom. viii. 28.

THE SYLVAN RETREAT,

OR, THE

POET'S WISH FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS.

OH! for some grot, whose rustic sides declare
Ease, and not splendor, was the builder's care;
Where roses spread their odoriferous charms,
And the curl'd vine extends her clasping arms:
Where happy silence lulls the anxious soul,
And makes it calm as summer waters roll.

Here let me learn to check each growing ill,
And bring to reason disobedient will;
To watch this incoherent breast, and find
What fav'rite passions rule the giddy mind.
Here no reproaches grate the wounded ear;
We see delighted, and transported hear:
While the sweet warblers wanton round the trees,
And the smooth waters catch the dying breeze.

Grief waits without, and melancholy gloom;
Come, chearful Hope, and fill the vacant room:
Come, ev'ry thought, which virtue gives to please;
Come, smiling Health! with thy companion, Ease;
Let these, and all that virtue's self attends,
Bless the still moments of my rural friends.
Peace to my foes, if any such there be,
And may heaven grant a calm repose to me.

THE

THE
RURAL CHRISTIAN'S
SOLILOQUY

ON THE
BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

The Time—A Summer's Morning.

Te rerum deus alme canam, dominumque, patremque
Magne parens. *Buchan.*

WHILE day's great regent rises with the morn,
And rides majestic thro' the eastern sky ;
Let me by grateful adoration led,
Rise with the lark to hail returning day ;
And by the good old Patriarch * taught, repair
To verdant fields, or flow'r enamel'd plains,
The still retreats of sacred *Contemplation.*

There

* Isaac.

There undisturb'd may I with pleasure trace
 (While pure devotion all my soul inspires)
 The charms of nature, and in them behold
 The work and wisdom of *creation's* GOD.

It must be so, my soul, there is a GOD !
 Who all things made and is in all things seen ;
 Each blade of grass o'er which I lonely tread,
 Proclaims in reason's ear a *power supreme* ;
 Who into vegetable life at first,
 Spoke by his word, each tree, each herb and flow'r,
 That grow spontaneous in these sylvan scenes.*

Or.

* Psalm civ. 14.

Beauty complete, and majesty divine,
 In all thy works, *ador'd Creator*, shine :
 Where'er I cast my wand'ring eyes around,
 The GOD I seek in every path is found ;
 Pursuing Thee, the flow'ry fields I pass,
 And read Thy name on every spire of grass ;
 I follow Thee thro' many a lonely shade,
 And find thee in the solitary glade ;
 I hail Thee in the kind refreshing gale,
 That swiftly whistles thro' the dewy vale ;
 The pink, the jes'mine, and the blushing rose,
 Perfum'd by Thee, their fragrant leaves disclose ;
 The feather'd choir, that welcomes in the spring,
 By Thee were taught their various notes to sing ;
 By thee, the morning in her crimson vest,
 And ornaments of golden clouds is drest ;
 The sun in all his splendor wears Thy beams,
 And drinks in light from thine exhaustless streams ;

The

Or how, or whence, by whose life-giving aid,
Could in the womb of time, ye atheists say,
The least of Nature's fine wrought beauties spring?
Could *fate* produce, or *chance* create them? no;
The thought is impious, gross absurdity,
Too glaring in itself to find a place
Within the bosoms of the *serious few*.

SAY, what is *chance* or *fate*? mere empty names;
Gods of *man's* making if they're gods at all:
Blasphemous doctrine! fit alone to be
By hell suggested and by devils taught:
That *chance* or *fate*, such blind ideal things,
The atheist's subterfuge and fictitious god,

Should

The moon reveals Thee by her glimm'ring ray,
Unnumber'd stars Thy glorious power display.
Amidst the solemn darkness of the night,
The thoughts of God my musing soul delight;
Thick shades and night Thy dread pavillion form,
In state Thou rid'st upon the flying storm,
While Thy strong hand its fiercest rage restrains,
And holds the wild unmanag'd winds in reins;
What sparklings then Thy majesty declare,
When thro' the vast expanse Thy lightnings glare;
When peals of thunder rend the skies around,
I hear Thy voice in the tremendous sound;
But oh! how small a part is known of Thee,
From all Thy works' immense variety!
Whatever mortal men *perfection* name,
Thou in an infinite degree dost claim.

Mrs. Rowse

Should be by man, possessing *reason's* light,
Put in the place of *DEITY* divine.

WHERE is the man with greatest wisdom blest,
Who by his art or knowledge, toil or care,
Could make the seed sown in the ground, to die,
Then rise again and under summer suns,
To swell and ripen into full-ear'd corn?

COULD ought throughout creation make itself?
Or say, my soul, was not creation's self
In the beginning, out of *nothing* brought,*
By Him who was, and is, and is to come,
The infinite, unmade, and self-existent GOD? (a)

AND is there then a GOD who all things made,
Who into being call'd the heav'ns and earth,
And is alike both seen and rules at will,
Throughout the vegetive and moral world?
Oh ! may His grace be seen, and rule in me.

LET me in all I do from day to day,
Devoutly strive t' approve myself to Him,
Whose all-pervading eye and gracious hand
Observes, upholds, and guides my wand'ring steps;
Whose

* Gen. i. 2.

(a) Col. i. 16, 17. John i. 3.

Whose bounty daily supercedes my wants,
 Whose watchful providence and guardian care
 Preserves, prolongs, and keeps my life from harm ;
 O may I *live* as well as *speak* his praise. §

SHOULD I be silent on so just a theme,
 Or ere unmindful of His goodness prove ;
 (In whom I live, from whom all blessings come)
 The very herds that browse on yonder plains,
 And sheep thick nibbling in the clover'd vale,
 Would with the chearful tenants of the bough,
 All join t' upbraid my vile ingratitude ;
 While daily fed from his all-bount'ous hand,
 (Who in due season gives to all their meat)
 They *warble, bleat*, and *low* his matchless praise.

THUS *Thomson* sung, meek nature's darling
 child,
 By heav'n instructed and by grace inspir'd ; While

§ Mr. Addison happily expresses the sentiments of a grateful Christian in the following beautiful lines :

When all thy mercies, O my God !
 My rising soul surveys,
 Transported with the view, I'm lost,
 In wonder, love and praise.
 Oh ! how shall words with equal warmth,
 The gratitude declare,
 Which glows within my ravish'd breast,
 But thou can'st read it there.

While true devotion waited on his lays.*
 Thus pious *Hervey* taught, and with success,
 In happy periods spread abroad His fame,
 While saints attended and approv'd the strains. (a)

" BLEAT out afresh, ye hills, ye mossy rocks
 " Retain the sound; the broad responsive low,
 " Ye vallies, raise; for the *great Shepherd* reigns
 "
 " Ye woodlands, all awake, a boundless song
 " Burst from the groves.
 " Ye chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,
 " At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
 " Crown the great hymn.
 " For *me*, when I forget the darling theme,
 " Whether the blossom blows, the summer ray
 " Rustles the plain, inspiring autumn gleams,
 " Or winter rises in the black'ning east;
 " Be my tongue mute, my fancy paint no more,
 " And dead to joy, forget my heart to beat.

Thomson's Hymn.

" BIRDS of the air, waft on your wings and
 " warble in your notes, His praise. Ye rougher
 " world of brutes, join with the gentle songsters
 " of

* Thomson's Hymn. (a) Hervey's Descant on Creation.

" of the shade, and howl to Him your hoarse ap-
 " plause. Bleat out, ye hills ; let broader lows be
 " responsive from the vales. Ye forests catch and
 " ye rocks retain the inarticulate hymn."

Hervey's Meditations.

BE this my chief employ, my only fame,
To sing His praises and His works proclaim,*
Who gave to universal nature birth,
And with his goodness crowns the teeming earth :
Whose boundless *mercy* lengthens out my days,
Whose *wisdom* guides, whose *grace* protects my }
ways.
To nature's GOD be never-ceasing praise.

Hallelujah.

* Thus would I pass my unambitious days,
Admire my maker's works and sing his praise :

A little cottage on the lonely mead
Should be my choice ; refresh'd by silver floods,
By hills surrounded, and obscur'd by woods ;
How sweetly here my few short years should glide !
My passions all subdu'd, and wants suppli'd ;
Pleas'd I'd review a life so calmly past,
Live well my present hour, and wait my last.

M. Browne.

K

A SOLEMN

A
SOLEMN ADDRESS
TO THE
EVER-PRESENT GOD.

DEO. OPT. MAX.

FATHER of all things both in heav'n and earth!
Who gave at first to every system birth ;
By whose prolific word, the worlds were made, }
Who ever reigns on high, with light array'd, }
To thee be endless adoration paid.

“ O THOU great Arbiter of life and death !”
Clouds are thy chariot and the wind thy breath ;
In every thunder-clap thy voice we hear,
In every lightning's flash behold thy spear ;
The sun derives its vital heat from Thee,
And bears resemblance to thy majesty ; *

The

* Whatever grace or harmony's exprest,
On all thy works, the God is there confest ;
Order and majesty adorn the whole,
Beauty and life, and Thou th' inspiring soul. Mrs. Row

The moon and stars, by thy benign command,
 Soften the shades when night o'erspreads the land ;^{*}
 The earth's thy footstool, and the heav'n's thy
 throne,
 All creatures, *thee* their great Creator own.

FROM thee alone, existence man receives,
 By thee created, and on thee he lives ;
 To thee alone our highest praise we owe,
 For all our blessings from thy bounty flow ;
 The herds and flocks to Thee their voices raise, *(a)*
 They *low* Thy goodness and they *bleat* Thy praise ;
Trees, herbs and flow'rs Thy works aloud proclaim,
 And *birds* melodious, warble forth Thy name ;
Snow, hail and rain, obey thine awful nod,
 While all creation echoes, THOU ART GOD. *(n)*

^{*} Ps. cxlii, 3, 19, 20. *(a)* Ps. ciii. 27.

(n) To Thee, whose temple is all space,
 Whose altar, earth, and skies ;
 One chorus let all beings raise
 All nature's incense rise.

Pope.

SYLVAN LETTERS,
OR THE
PLEASURES OF A COUNTRY LIFE,
IN PROSE AND VERSE.
TO WHICH ARE ADDED
REASONS
IN DEFENCE OF
SYLVAN RETIREMENT.
THE FOURTH EDITION ENLARGED.

Felix qui propriis ævum transegit in arvis.
Rura mihi, et irrigui placeant in vallibus omnes. *Virgil.*

Ye woods and wilds receive me to your shade,
These still retreats my contemplation aid;
Ye groves and flow'ry vales in you we find,
The first unblemish'd joys for man design'd:
Nature does here her virgin smiles afford,
And shews us Paradise again restor'd;
Our souls their former harmony acquire,
And vexing care and conscious guilt retire.

Mrs. Rowe.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the author of the following letters is apprehensive some persons may be ready to blame him for publishing them, as the late Rev. Mr. *James Hervey* was, for printing his excellent and devout meditations, it being said that his tenets were dishonourable to God and injurious to society, by making men melancholy and regardless of business; the author begs leave to observe, the ensuing epistles are *principally* designed for, and addressed to those, who having past thro' the more *active* and *busy* scenes of life, are out of choice and inclination, desirous of retiring from the noise, bustle, and cares of the town, to enjoy the tranquil pleasures of rural solitude,* in conversing with themselves, and maintaining a more intimate communion with God; by which means they may be enabled, not only with *greater* composure of mind and fixation of thought, to reduce the knowledge of their duty, which they had attained by theory, into *practice*, but study without disturbance and intruding cares, that useful and important lesson, how to live in *this* world, so as to have good ground to hope of being eternally happy in a *better* after death. See letter 27.

* Those letters in the following collection, written on *solitude* and *retirement*, are chiefly intended to shew, how a retired life may be best improved, to the real benefit of our own souls, and the advantage of our fellow creatures.

TO THE READER.

RURAL solitude is always chosen and preferred by the *contemplative* man, before all the deluding scenes of pleasure and festivity; however the gay, unthinking, and polite part of mankind, are charmed with the futile amusements of the town, the mimicry of the theatres, or splendors of a ball; those who delight in the calmness of reflection and serenity of thought, seek the peaceful abodes of the *country*, and are best pleased with the tranquillity of a sylvan retreat, according to the opinion of a late celebrated author,* which I beg leave to insert in his own words, in defence of my above assertions.

“ THE love of retirement has in all ages adhered
“ very closely to those minds, which have been
“ most enlarged by knowledge, or elevated by
“ genius.

“ THOSE who have enjoyed every thing that
“ is generally supposed to confer happiness, have
“ been forced to seek it in the shades of privacy;
“ though

* Dr. Johnson.

“ though they have possessed both power and
“ riches in abundance, and been therefore sur-
“ rounded by men, who considered it as their chief
“ interest, to remove from them every thing that
“ might offend their ease, ruffle their tranquillity,
“ or interrupt their pleasures ; they have soon felt
“ the languors of satiety, and found themselves un-
“ able to pursue the race of life, except with fre-
“ quent respirations of intermediate solitude.” *

THE following letters exemplify the benefits of retirement and the happiness of a *country* life, while they at the same time contain matter for *serious* enquiry, as well as sentiments of real moment and importance. May they be read with candour and received with attention ; and the various anecdotes and lessons of morality they hold out, prove both instructive and entertaining to every reader.

July 2, 1772.

G. W.

* Rambler, No. 7.

SYLVAN LETTERS,

OR, THE

PLEASURES OF A COUNTRY LIFE,

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

LETTER I.

From a young lady in the country to a relation in town, describing the situation of her retreat, and her rural employments.

MY DEAR SOPHIA,

AFTER a (three days) very agreeable journey, I am arrived at Dr. S—'s villa ; and, according to promise, take the first opportunity of informing you how I got down, and my opinion of the situation.

WITH respect to what I met with on the road, it would not afford variety enough to be entertaining ; only this I must beg leave to say, the pleasant country towns and villages we passed through, with the extensive prospects on every side, and fine weather,

weather, all contributed to make travelling delightful, by taking off from the fatigue which naturally attends rising early, riding all day, and going to bed late at night.

THE house is elegant beyond description, about four miles from the high road, near a small village, and surrounded with woods, groves, and fertile vallies; just such a retreat as I have long wish'd for, as a welcome asylum from the noise and hurry of a gay and fashionable life. Here no balls or assemblies, plays or masquerades, divert my attention, or invite me to kill time; but the warbling songsters of the groves daily present me with the native harmony of an *aerial* concert, and praise the Author of universal nature in melodious songs.*

I DOUBT not but you envy my situation, especially as I know you love retirement; and permit me to acknowledge, in the sincerity of disinterested friendship, without the least flattery, nothing, my dear Sophy, but your agreeable company and conversation

* However too many seek happiness (tho' in vain) in the circles of dissipation and sensuality, the lovers of retirement and contemplation can truly say, with *Scipio*, *Nunquam minus solus quam cum solus*; never less alone than when alone.

versation could add to my present happiness ; the loss of which I hope you will in some measure make up by your entertaining letters ; the longer they are, the more acceptable, the oftener, the more welcome ; and be assured, in return, some of my pleasantest moments will be answering your's.

THE whole family I am with, lay themselves out to please me ; Miss B——, the doctor's niece, a sensible, good natur'd young lady, about twenty-two, (who Mrs. S—— being in a bad state of health, has taken as her companion) seems particularly fond of me ; we sleep together by choice ; often walk out together, and, in short, are like two sisters ; where you see one, you are almost sure to find the other ; she is fond of solitude, has been educated in a religious manner, and early taught to pay a suitable respect and reverence to the doctrines of the gospel. The family is kept in great order, and called together every morning and evening, to join in the sacred acts of devotion ; the doctor himself is the chaplain, and appears every way suited for the solemn work.

AFTER breakfast, Miss B. and I retire into our chamber to dress ourselves for the day, then sit down to work, and by turns read to each other ; about twelve o'clock we commonly take a walk in
the

the garden (a sweet place indeed) but this I will give you a description of in my next; after dinner the doctor goes to his study and smokes his pipe, or resigns himself to sleep, while Miss and I take a turn or two down a fine serpentine gravel walk, shaded with lofty elm trees by the side of the garden, or sit awhile in a beautiful arbor at the bottom of it, then return into the parlour, which looks over the road, and presents me with a charming prospect of the distant country. Here Miss B. has her harpsichord, which she plays on delightfully, and knowing I am fond of *sacred* music, often favours me with a song out of Handel's Messiah, or a favourite anthem: this employs us till tea; afterwards, if not too cool, we take another walk, either into the garden, or a grove adjoining to it, and listen to the evening songs of the nightingale, whose pleasing notes are far more grateful to me than the finest airs of an Italian opera: as night advances, we are forced to leave the pretty creature, lulling itself to sleep with her own agreeable sounds. But I beg pardon for detaining you so long: believe me to be,

Dear Sophia,

AYLSHAM, *Norfolk*,

July 4.

Your's unalterably.

LET.

LETTER II.

To the same. *Describing a repository or burial place, built in a grove near the garden, with a description of the latter.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR kind letter found me at tea yesterday afternoon with the doctor, his daughter, and Mrs. L——, a maiden lady about *forty*, a relation of theirs (upon a visit to them) who I forgot to mention in the hurry of my first epistle: she is a very chearful woman, but fond of a domestic life, and very politely shares the care of the family with Miss B. Her good sense, affability, and discretion, are every day more visible, in her prudent conduct and entertaining conversation.

After tea was over, Miss B. told me if it was agreeable, she would shew me what they called the *repository*; I readily consented, and she took me down the walk I described in my last, into the adjoining grove, whose numerous trees, planted in rows, form several pretty walks, while the pleasing gloom adds a *verdant* solemnity to the whole: near the end, surrounded with lofty spreading elms, is

L

the

the repository, or (if I may so call it) retired *Mausoleum*, for it appears to be an imitation of one of the sepulchres of the antients, or Ægyptian burying places, it being built for the reception of the dead.

We enter by an old-fashion'd door, which seems as if it had been made two or three hundred years ago; opposite to the entrance, and about three yards from the door, a long curtain draws back and discovers several niches for coffins in an horizontal position one over another, three of which are filled up with the gentleman who built the house, his wife, and daughter; on each side are lamps, which are to be supposed perpetually burning: at the top of the building, which is square, are two grates made of wire, to let in the fresh air: the ground is left unpav'd, in case any one should die of the small-pox, or some other contagious distemper, to receive such bodies, to prevent them infecting the place. Death's heads, hour-glasses, and several such like emblems are painted on the walls; over the door appear in large characters, those remarkable words of the apostle Paul, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to GOD, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.* In
one

one corner is written, "Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula."^a Near this, under the representation of a scull, with a crown on it, is seen that humiliating, but just observation of Horace, "Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas, regumque turres." (a)

THE silence and dreariness of the whole, strike a religious awe upon the mind, and drive away all the gay images of an ensnaring world; whilst the exanimate contents in their narrow cells, point to that passage in the Psalms, LORD, *teach me the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am.*

AFTER staying here some time, viewing the building, and conversing together on the momentous subjects it inculcates, we returned up the grove into the garden. The entrance to this is through an iron gate of curious workmanship; a broad gravel walk spreads itself through the middle; at the extremity of which, is a pretty neat arbour, surrounded with jessamines and honeysuckles,

L 2

suckles,

* Death alone proves what little things men are.

(a) Death knocks at, or visits without distinction, the beggar's cottage and the monarch's palace.

suckles, whose mellifluous odours are far more refreshing and agreeable to me, than the so-much-admir'd perfumes of musk, civet, or bergamot. Here Miss B. and I often repair to converse on the beauties of creation or the happiness of a country life ; here, when she is unavoidably engaged in family affairs, I retire alone, to enjoy the pleasures of reading and meditation, or spend some of my happiest moments in writing to my dear Sophia ; an employment I always begin with delight, and leave with the greatest reluctance.

By the side of the arbour, another walk is made, which leads to a beautiful summer-house, built on an eminence, near a delightful and extensive meadow, where lambs, white as the driven snow, and harmless as the cooing dove, bleat responsive through the pleasing verdure. But I must break off here, lest I entirely exhaust your patience (with compliments where due) I remain, dear Sophia,

Your's, &c.

AYLSHAM, *July 30.*

LETTER

LETTER III.

To the same. *With a description of noon, and a conversation that passed between Miss B. and her, on the receipt and perusal of her last epistle.*

DEAR SOPHIA,

YOUR last, the footman brought me as I was sitting under the shadow of a spreading oak tree, angling in a beautiful canal near the bottom of the garden. Miss B. was reading to me, out of Thomson's excellent poem on the summer, where, describing a happy pair, he says,

. Devoting all
To love, each was to each a dearer self ;
Supremely happy in th' awaken'd power
Of giving joy. Alone amid the shades,
Still in harmonious intercourse they liv'd
The rural day, and talk'd the flowing heart,
Or sigh'd and look'd unutterable things.

THE sun was shining in its meridian splendour, the herds and flocks in the neighbouring meadows, were reclin'd under the verdant screen of trees and hedges, to shun the noon-day heat, and sleep away

the sultry hours, fann'd by the gentle breezes that blew across the fields reviving coolness; the busy bees were extracting delicious sweets from every flower; while the industrious ants, with indefatigable labour, were dragging their several burdens (of provisions for the community, or materials for repairing their habitations, injur'd by the heedless traveller, or unavoidable accidents to which they are daily exposed) to their distant homes.*

WELCOME was the refreshing shade and cheering zephyrs, but far more welcome to me was my dear Sophia's kind and agreeable letter, which contained such a pleasing description of the happiness of early devoting ourselves to GOD, and the benefits of a religious life, contrasted with the miseries of the ungodly in a *future* state, which not only witness the piety of the writer, but the feelings of
a generous

* This reminds me of the poet's admonition to the indolent and thoughtless of *both* sexes:

Observe the sage industrious ant,
To her, thou sluggard, go;
She well provides 'gainst future want,
When winter threatens woe.

By her example learn to live,
Her conduct make thine own;
For Heav'n directs her how to thrive,
And all her labours crown.

a generous, grateful, and elevated mind, impressed with the reality of the truths related, and earnestly desirous of the eternal welfare of your friend; after reading it over with great satisfaction, I gave it to Miss B. assured there was nothing in it but what agreed entirely with *her* notions of religion, and experience of divine truths, which she has often told me of in her discourses with me, on the sublime enjoyments of the real believer in both worlds.

WHEN she had finished it, and observed the propriety and justice of your sentiments, we began conversing together on the subjects you had discussed in such a judicious and lively manner. Indeed, says Miss B. early piety recommended by a religious example and education, and attended with the divine blessing, is productive of unspeakable comfort, satisfaction, and joy; a joy which the apostle Paul styles full of glory, and our justly-admired poet (Pope) beautifully describes in the following lines:

Which nothing earthly gives, nor can destroy,
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy.

WHAT inexpressible pleasure must it give a fond indulgent parent, to see his child endeavour-
ing

ing to follow his steps in the paths of virtue and religion: on the other hand, how thankful should the children of such parents be, not only for their solicitous concern for their temporal and eternal interests, but for the continuance of such valuable lives, while many are taken off in the prime of life, and forced to leave their young and it may be *numerous* offspring to a world of temptations, calamities, and distress.*

As she spoke the last, I observed a pitying tear trickle down her tender cheek, at the thoughts of the various difficulties to which the helpless orphans are frequently exposed; for her humanity is as great as her will is good, to help and relieve the wretched and unfortunate.

I was just going to make a reply to what she had said, when the servant brought us word that dinner was ready; upon which we left our agreeable situation, and returned up the garden, into the house, where we found the doctor and Mrs. L——
inter-

* Religious parents in the views of death, may joyfully leave their dear children in the hands, and under the care of that gracious God, who has said, *when father and mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up.* Psalms xxvii. 10. Jeremiah xlix. 11.

interrogating the footman, whether he had found us, and where ; having lost us ever since *twelve* o'clock. Forgive, my dear friend, the length of this, and believe me to be, with the greatest sincerity,

Your's, &c.

AYLSHAM, *Aug. 12.*

LETTER IV.

From a minister in the country to a lady in town, giving an account of the death of her daughter, with the melancholy circumstances that attended it.

MADAM,

THE contents of this epistle, I doubt not, will greatly surprize you, but not more so than the accident which occasions it, did me and my whole family ; your daughter, whom you was so obliging as to leave under my wife's care, is now, I hope, in glory. You are startled and wonder what I mean ; you may well be surprized indeed, but, not to keep you longer in suspense, I mst acquaint you, tho' with

with the greatest reluctance and concern, she died this morning : you know she was in a decline when she left London, which is not only one of the most flattering but fatal disorders which the body is subject to ; for persons often think themselves well one hour, and are dying the next ; so it was with Miss M. we thought at breakfast she seemed pretty chearful, and eat as much as she had done of a morning since she came down.

ABOUT eleven o'clock, as she and my eldest daughter were walking together in the garden, she complained of a violent pain in her stomach, and before any assistance could be had, fainted away, and died in a few minutes after : the shock which it gave my daughter, has thrown her into violent fits, and what will be the issue of them God only knows. With respect to my wife and myself, we sincerely participate with you, in the grief and concern you must experience for the loss of so valuable and dutiful a child ; the whole house is in the utmost confusion ; what with the surprize at so sudden a death and the fears of the dreadful consequences respecting my poor girl, I can hardly tell what I write ; I hope you will pardon the abruptness and inaccuracies you *must* discover in this epistle, being written with a trembling hand, an aching heart, and weeping eyes.

I NEED

I NEED not tell you what I feel while I am inditing these few lines, nor how much pain I know they must give you, in the reading of them ; suffice it to say, as a parent, my fears and anxiety of mind for the recovery of my daughter, is no less distressing than the sorrow and concern you feel for the loss of your's : it would be quite superfluous to add, how necessary your presence will be at our house as soon as possible.

I am, Madam,

With all due respect,

POOL, Dorsetshire,
May 21.

Your's to command.

LETTER V.

From the minister's daughter after her recovery, to a young lady in town, with some more particulars concerning the character and behaviour of the late Miss M. concluding with a few remarks on the necessity of being always in readiness for our approaching change.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM just recovered from a dangerous fever, occasioned by the sudden death of Miss M. (the pretty,

pretty, sensible, and good-natured young lady. I told you of, in my last) I was not expected to live for a week; my father and mother were in the greatest trouble imaginable, not only for me, but the melancholy accident that brought on my illness; through mercy I have now got the better of it, and take the first opportunity (though I am very weak still) of writing to my dear Berinda, to acquaint her with the particulars of the mournful story, which I know you are desirous to be informed of.

Miss M. had been with us five weeks, and showing a particular esteem for me, I promised myself great pleasure in her company and conversation; she was fond of walking, and would often ask me to accompany her, which I readily complied with, being willing to oblige her as far as lay in my power: indeed she was so good-tempered, affable, and complaisant, that every one in the family did all they could to make her situation agreeable, and I may truly say, we are all sincere mourners for her. How pleasing it is to be so much beloved by others! what a strong motive this is, to set us on endeavouring to make ourselves as deservedly esteemed.

SHE was very open and free in discoursing with
me,

me, and made me the confidant of her inmost secrets; in the morning which she died, as we were walking together in the garden, she addressed me in words to the following effect: " My dear
 " Miss F——, the many civilities and respect I
 " have received from you and your worthy family,
 " call for my most grateful acknowledgments; I
 " wish it was in my power to make a suitable re-
 " turn, but that it is not, nor ever will be, for I
 " find the disorder, on which account I came into
 " the country, increasing on me daily; however
 " at times I appear much better, it is only the na-
 " ture of the complaint so to do; I know it will
 " soon put an end to a life which would be but a
 " burthen if prolonged; yet I cannot leave the
 " world, without telling the *real* cause of this fatal
 " complaint I have laboured under for these four
 " months past.*

" ABOUT two years ago, a young fellow who
 " visited a near relation of mine, happening to
 " see me there one evening, fell in love with me,
 " as he was pleased to say, which in the end proved
 M " only

* This was a *real* fact, and plainly shews how very cau-
 tious young women should be in fixing their affections too
 hastily, or believing every man who flatters them only to de-
 ceive, ruin, and then laugh at them, and boast of it.

“ only a pretence to *deceive* and *abandon* me : he
“ was a very likely young man, and well instructed
“ in the cruel and diabolical arts of flattery and
“ delusion. By his easy and polite address, he
“ gained too great an ascendancy over my affec-
“ tions, and soon afterwards I found he had all
“ my heart : his genteel behaviour and deport-
“ ment deceived my dear and tender mother into
“ an esteem for him ; and the particular notice he
“ took of *me*, together with his assiduous endea-
“ vours to ingratiate himself into my favour, made
“ me think much better of him than I have since
“ found (to my unspeakable sorrow and confu-
“ sion) he deserved.

“ It is very hard to know who are sincere ; I’m
“ sure I have sufficient reason to say so ; for he con-
“ tinued his addresses with the greatest appearance
“ of *real* love, till the day was appointed for our
“ marriage ; when hearing accidentally of a young
“ lady with a greater fortune than mine, he soon
“ found her out, and in about *three* months after,
“ married her ; which news being brought to me,
“ fell on my spirits and threw me into this de-
“ cline, which I hope, I have thus far bore with
“ a becoming fortitude and resignation, and now
“ find too much to suffer many days longer.

“ I forgive him who is the cause of my grief,
“ from

“ from the bottom of my heart, but I blame my-
“ self for my too easy credulity and belief. That
“ men are base, designing, and inconstant, I am
“ certain of; then why did I listen to and believe
“ the false and cruel Sophron? I stand self-con-
“ demned; yet who among women, can steel
“ their hearts against the soft and pleasing sensa-
“ tions of a tender, generous passion; encouraged
“ by the addresses of a man, who seems by nature
“ formed to felicitate the fair? But I have done;
“ may you, my dear, never experience the anguish
“ of a *slighted* love; I have paid *dear* for it, *very*
“ dear indeed.”————

HERE she burst into a flood of tears, and taking hold of my hand, prest it with all the ardour of a genuine friendship, and with many sighs and much difficulty, begged me to conceal the real cause of her illness, till after her decease, as she never had divulged it to any one but me. We had not walked above *five minutes* after she mentioned this last request, when she complained of a violent pain in her breast, so very great as to stop her breath; and before I could make any one hear me (for we were near the bottom of our garden) she fainted away in my arms, and after fetching one or two deep sighs expired, leaving me in a situation inexpressibly affecting, and near desperation.

M 2

MY

My mother and sister thinking we had been walking longer than usual, came to seek for us, and happening to turn down the walk we were in, found me as I have described, and getting assistance, had us both conveyed into the house, for I went into fits as soon as they came up to me. I have been particular in the account, and far exceeded the bounds of a letter, I own; but as it was your desire to hear the whole of the circumstances, I hope you will forgive me. I shall only add, how absolutely necessary it is to be always ready to meet the last enemy (seeing life is so precarious) she, poor girl, I trust, was so, though I believe she did not think her end so near as it proved.

IN a few days, hours, or minutes more, and we may be numbered among the dead; who can tell which of us shall be the *next*? then let us strive earnestly to be interested in Him, who hath declared, *Whosoever believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall not die eternally.**

POOL, Dorsetshire,
July 10.

I remain,
Your's sincerely.

* John xi. 25, 26.

Rom. x. 11.

LETTER VI.

From Miss F——, the minister's daughter, to the same young lady, with an epitaph on Miss M. made by a gentleman who well knew her living, and now sincerely mourns her loss; concluding with reflections on the vanity of all earthly enjoyments without health.

DEAR BERINDA,

I FORGOT to tell you in my last, that Mr. Maynard, seeing Miss M. at our house the third day after she came down, was greatly charmed both with her person and conversation; for she had a very fair skin, a modest, innocent countenance, and a great deal of good sense, accompanied with a sweetness of temper, that could not fail of being pleasing and agreeable to every one she conversed with.

He was very inquisitive to know who she was; and after being told by my father what an amiable character she bore, and having reason to believe the truth of it from what little he had seen of her, seemed very desirous of being introduced to her as an humble servant; but this my father would by

no means allow of without he first went and gained her mother's consent ; accordingly being told where Mrs. M. lived in town, he set off the Monday following, with full purpose to ask her permission to pay his addresses to her daughter.

UNFORTUNATELY for him, he was thrown from his horse, before he had got four miles from his house, and received a dangerous contusion in his head, upon which he was obliged to be conveyed with the utmost care imaginable to the next cottage, where a surgeon from our town being sent for, who knew him very well, dressed his wound, and ordered him not to be moved 'till he should call again.

IN short, he continued extremely bad till the day before Miss M. died, when finding himself on the mending hand (though very slowly) and being just able to sit up for the first time since the accident, he began to be in hopes of once more pursuing his intended journey ; but oh ! how great was his surprize and concern, when the day following he heard that Miss M. was dead ; words are too faint to describe his grief and concern on receiving the melancholy news.

AFTER being told how sudden it happened,
and

and the conversation that passed between her and me, he fetched a deep sigh, and said (while the tears flowed down his pallid cheeks in great abundance) "The dear creature was *too* good to live in this world; she's gone to heaven, I doubt not, where I hope soon to follow her." Here he made a long pause, being very weak and low, and was often observed to lift up his eyes, as if in some ejaculatory prayer. After gaining a little more strength, he begged his sister (who was with him most of the time of his illness, and gave me this account of it) to get pen, ink and paper, and write down the following character of her, which he said he was certain she deserved.

Her *religion* was of the heart,
 Her *devotion* warm, yet reasonable,
 Free from superstition and ostentation;
 She was steadily *virtuous*; not formal nor censorious;
 Strictly *prudent*, yet easy and affable;
 She was *benevolent* without weakness;
Cheerful without levity;
Ingenious without affectation,
 And *beautiful* without vanity;
 Formed for all the tenderness of friendship;
 Most obliging and most sincere,
 But cautious in her choice;
 She adorned the dignity of virtue,

By

By the grace of humility, and good nature ;
She liv'd above the world without pretending to
despise it ;
Sustain'd the afflictions of life, with the patience
of a primitive Christian ;
And died with that tranquillity and resignation
Which becomes one, whose hopes are full of
IMMORTALITY.

AFTER this was done, he seem'd inclinable to sleep, being much fatigued, and continued very ill for a month afterwards, and was thought by the physician in great danger, but is since so much recovered as to walk about his house, though not able to go out yet, and it is to be feared never will, without somebody with him, as he appears to be going into a deep melancholy, his spirits at times being exceedingly depressed.

WHAT avails, now, his having the greatest abundance of the good things of this life, his elegant house, furniture, and servants ; his beautiful garden, summer-house, fish-ponds, and arbours ? for he cannot enjoy them : he is really much to be pitied, and a striking instance of the vanity and nothingness of all sublunary pleasures and emoluments, without health and ability to partake of them.

Oh !

OH! my dear Berinda, we cannot be thankful enough for this best of earthly blessings, *health*, which, like most of our enjoyments, none know the *true value* of, till they have felt its *loss*. I remain,

My dear friend's real well-wisher, &c.

Aug. 2.

LETTER VII.

To the same. *Giving an account of Mrs. M's. arrival at the minister's house, and her behaviour on seeing her daughter; with a description of Miss M's. funeral, and the improvement that should be made of such alarming Providences.*

DEAR BERINDA,

YOUR reflections on the unhappy and affecting situation of Mr. Maynard, are very just, and entirely consonant to those sentiments of piety towards GOD, and charity to men (which intends universal benevolence or philanthropy) which our pious and honoured parents have so early and earnestly endeavoured to inculcate in our tender minds; may they always direct our thoughts, influence our desires, and be the rule of our actions.

You

You beg to know how Mrs. M. the deceased young lady's mother, behaved on seeing her: truly moving indeed; she got to our house the third day after her daughter's death, and as soon as she saw my mother (without being able to say a word for some time, overcome with grief) she burst into a flood of tears; my mother could hardly refrain, and my sister, who was in the room, actually did weep with her. After she had given vent to the first emotions of sorrow, she desired to see her dear child; accordingly my mother and sister accompanied her to the room where the corpse lay.

As soon as the door was opened, she went up to the coffin, and looking into it, cried out with great vehemence, "Ah! that's my dear child, indeed! my once dutiful and much lov'd daughter, lovely even in death, who was the only support and comfort of my life:" here she again gave way to excessive grief, and was just going to faint, when my mother took a bottle of drops out of her pocket, and applying it to her nose, and sprinkling her face with some cold water, brought her to herself again; when, looking at my mother, she said, with great difficulty, "Oh! madam, you know not the pain and anguish of a fond mother, on the death of an *only* child, whose dutiful and affectionate behaviour endeared her to all her acquaintance,

quaintance, but especially to her loving and indulgent parent."* ———

SHE would have proceeded, but the overflowings of heart-felt sorrow stopt her utterance: my mother seeing it affected her so deeply, prevailed with her, after many intreaties, to leave the room, but not before she had taken another farewell look of the dear deceased. ———

THE Tuesday following, Miss M. was buried according to her own desire, in the same vault with her uncle, who lies in our church, about seven o'clock in the evening. As (you know) we are not far from the church, it was a walking funeral. The corpse was carried first, as usual, the mutes and feathers going before it; the pall was supported by six young ladies in white; three came from London on purpose, and the others were Miss L. Miss W. and my sister: each of them were handed along by a young gentleman in white, all acquaintances of the deceased; then followed the afflicted Mrs. M. with her brother, who lives
in

* Dutiful and obedient children are great blessings to their parents, and will always be the favourites of heaven, and enjoy the smiles of the Almighty. Ephesians vi. 1, 2, 3. Colossians iii. 20. Psalms cxxvii. 3.

in our town ; after them, my father and mother, then four couple more, relations and friends of Mrs. M. whom you know nothing of, accompanied with many promiscuous persons of both sexes, young and old, whom the sight had drawn together, but hardly a dry eye among them.

THE Sunday following, by Mrs. M.'s desire, my father preached a sermon from these words, **1 Cor. xv. 49.** *And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* In the course of the sermon, when he gave the character of the deceased, many were observed to shed tears ; but nothing could equal poor Mrs. M.'s concern ; every one pitied her ; especially those who knew her valuable daughter when living, for *they* only could have an adequate idea how great her loss was.

You see, my dear, from the particular account I have given of every circumstance relating to Miss M. and her mother, how ready and desirous I am of entertaining you when it lays in my power. The story, however mournful and affecting, was your request ; as such I willingly complied in sending it. The best use we can make of it, is, to be dutiful and obedient to *our* parents, that they may have as much reason to love us, as Miss M.

was beloved by her mother and all her acquaintance; and to set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth,* knowing that all things here below are changeable and inconstant, fading and passing away; but all above is abiding and secure, and will remain unchangeably the same through a long eternity.

I remain,

Dear Berinda,

Aug. 14.

Your's till death.

LETTER VIII.

From a gentleman lately retired into the country, to his friend in town; with reasons in defence of a rural life, and reflections on happiness and contentment.

DEAR SIR,

IN your last (which I received on returning from a very pleasant walk, my amiable Sobrina and I
N had

* Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised. Prov. xxxi. 30.

had been taking, in one of the finest evenings the summer has afforded, you rally me on my *sylvan* expedition, as you are pleased to term it, and seem to intimate a dislike of my leaving town; but, by way of excuse, mention this as a reason, as it deprives you of my company and conversation; (very polite I must own, however.)

IN vindication of myself, and to satisfy your enquiry, what could induce me to take up such a resolution, as that of retiring into the country; I will give you my reasons for so doing, and those particularly which had *most* weight with me; though it may be, in *your* view they appear trifling, or no *substantial* reasons at all.

THE first was for my *health*, but more especially that of my dear partner's, as she was often troubled with violent pains in her head, accompanied with little or no rest at night. To which you may reply; Could you not as well have taken a house for the summer near town, where you might have gone in the evening and come back in the morning; or made short excursions for a fortnight or three weeks at a time, about the country, without entirely abandoning your London friends? I answer, we both of us thought it better to settle at a distance from town, as the farther we went, the
more

more pure and healthy we accounted the air would be;* and that the hurry and fatigue of continually going backwards and forwards (in a great measure) would spoil the pleasure we should otherways take in the country.

THE second was, as the calmness and serenity of a rural situation best suit with, and are most likely to encrease the tranquillity of mind, composure of thought, and love of reflection, which is so natural to be desired by every *contemplative* man, and all those who are fond of admiring and studying the various beauties of nature, as you know I am much delighted with.

IN the next place, I was certain that nothing more contributed to promote *serious* meditation, nor afforded greater opportunities of searching into the truths of religion, the wisdom of GOD, and the concerns of the soul, without disturbance or annoy, than the peaceful shades of a country retreat;†

N 2

and

* Those who have been, as it were, long smok-dried in London, sigh ardently for vernal breezes, and the zephyrs of an unclouded sky.

Pratt.

† Some retire from the world, not merely to bask in ease, or gratify curiosity, but that being disengaged from the common

mon

and, indeed, what can render us more acceptable to the Supreme Being, than spending our time in his fear and service?

I don't intend, by retiring into the abodes of rural felicity, to lead an idle, vain, and slothful life of indolence and inactivity; if so, you might well have censured me for the design I had in view; but this was not the case. I knew there were various duties and employments indispensibly necessary for me to attend to, both for my own and my fellow-creatures benefit and advantage, while enjoying the serene pleasures of retirement;* which I will inform you of in my next, with an account of the manner in which I spend my time; and hope fully to convince you, that not one single minute hangs heavy on my hands, as you seem to think must be the case; at present I only beg leave to add, as the pursuit of happiness and desire of contentment is implanted in every one, more or less, they will and do naturally excite all men to use

men's cares of life, they may employ more time in the duties of religion, that they may regulate their actions with stricter vigilance, and purify their thoughts by more frequent meditation.

Adventurer. No. 126.

* See Retir'd Pleasures in prose and verse.

use those several means and endeavours for the obtaining of them, which appear most likely for that purpose.

ONE thinks happiness is procured by *riches*, therefore makes the getting of them his whole concern ; another supposes (vain imagination !) it consists in high sounding *titles* and the grandeur of a *court*, therefore makes the pursuit of honours and emoluments the business of his life ; a third places his felicity in *gaiety* and *amusements*, or in gaming and licentiousness, and on that account is lost in vanity or overwhelmed in dissipation, and (dreadful thought) it may be neither of them perceive their fatal mistake, till it is too late ; how thankful then should *they* be, whom an indulgent Providence directs to the best methods of attaining happiness, and gives both a will and opportunity to practise them ?

For *my* part I must own, the surest way to be happy and contented in every station, appears to me, leaving all to the wise disposal of the great Creator of heaven and earth,* and looking on

N 3

whatever

* We to ourselves may all our wishes grant,
For nothing coveting, we nothing want.

Dryden.

whatever happens to us here below, whether prosperous or adverse, as ordered for the *best* by Infinite Wisdom and unerring Goodness ; and this I hope I have done thus far, and shall continue to do (as enabled) till death; firmly persuaded of Mr. Pope's assertion, that

. Whatever is, is *right*.*

I cannot leave off, without sincerely wishing you and Mrs. ———, all that felicity, comfort, and satisfaction this world can give, and eternal happiness, when time shall be no more,

DORKING, *Surry*,
Aug. 12.

And remain,

Your's, &c.

* This respects more particularly what God sees fit in infinite wisdom to appoint or permit to happen in the moral world, not what men by their wicked courses are left to bring on themselves, as *warnings*, *punishments*, and *deserts*, though all is right and just, and will doubtless appear so in the end.

The omniscient Creator must know what is best for his creatures : and as he is the Governor of the universe, and has all things under his command, will assuredly make all events turn out for his own glory, and the real benefit and happiness of his people ; 'tis our *duty* as well as *interest* to believe it. *Romans viii.* 28.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the same. *Giving an account of the manner he spent his time; with an extract from Thomson's Poem on the Summer.*

DEAR FRIEND,

I RECEIVED much pleasure in reading your's of the 21st instant, and now, according to your request, send you an account of the manner I spend my time. In the morning I rise most commonly about *six*, and go into my study (which is a small but very pleasant room, overlooking my garden into a spacious meadow, where the sportive lambs bleat harmless through the ever-living verdure) here, after offering up my thankful acknowledgments to the Almighty, for the mercies of the night past, and humbly imploring his future care and protection, I sit down and read for about a quarter of an hour; after this, if it is fine weather, I take a walk through the adjacent fields, and enjoy the fragrance of the mellifluous gales that bear on their refreshing wings from every bud, unnumbered sweets; which reminds me of those pleasing lines of a late eminent poet—

Oft

Oft let me wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freshness breaths, and dash the trembling
drops,
From the bent bush, as thro' the verdant maze
Of sweet-brier hedges I pursue my walk.

Thomson.

while birds in tuneful warblings, hail returning morn: this is a pleasure unknown to the inhabitants of London, and which business oftentimes precludes. Indeed the greatest part of mankind have no relish for such an enjoyment, but had rather indulge themselves in wasting their hours in sleep; to them it is no loss, their being deprived of this pleasure, and therefore cannot be regretted; but to me, who really experience great delight and satisfaction in it, 'tis additionally pleasing and agreeable.*

ABOUT a quarter before nine I return home to breakfast, after which my dear Eliza joins with me in adoring that unmerited goodness and mercy, which

* Early rising is much to be commended ; a walk in the country about seven o'clock, of a fine summer's morning, is not only very healthy, but truly delightful.—Well does the poet say,

Early to bed and early to rise,
Is the way to be *healthy, wealthy, and wise.*

which we can truly say, have thus far followed us all the days of our lives, and continue to heighten that happiness and felicity which we both have great reason to own (with gratitude and praise to the divine Author) took place on our union with each other.

DID I not believe you to be my real friend, and well-wisher, respecting *both* worlds, I should not be so particular and exact in *this* part of my account; and as I am certain of your forgiveness, should I exceed the usual length of an epistle, I am determined not to conceal the smallest circumstance concerning my employments, that I think is likely to give you pleasure in the perusal, much less that part of them which I know you practise yourself, and therefore cannot but approve.

ABOUT *eleven*, supposing it is fine, we take a ride seven or eight miles, and then return to dinner; or if not so convenient for us *both* to be out, I go by myself; but never enjoy half the pleasure as when she is with me, (there are very few couples I believe so happy with each other now-a-days.)

AFTER dinner I take a turn or two round my garden, and then into an exceeding pleasant summer-house, where I have a small collection of books

books on the most interesting subjects, and two or three different sorts of *telescopes*, *microscopes*, *globes*, *maps*, and a *mirror* for viewing prints, furnished with a great variety of the finest and most delightful views England affords.

HERE I employ myself till tea, sometimes in reading books, or writing down those reflections I make upon the several objects around me; or if it is not very hot, I take my fishing tackle and spend an hour or two in *angling*, in a fine canal about twenty yards from my house, while my dear partner agreeably entertains me with reading *Thomson's Seasons*, *Paradise Lost*, or *Hervy's Meditations*, which are our favourite authors.

AFTER tea (like an old-fashioned couple) we take a walk together, arm in arm, through the flowery meads, to behold the pomp and grandeur of the setting sun, and beguile the passing hours in tender and endearing converse; which always reminds me of that beautiful description in Thomson's Summer.

. Social friends,
Attun'd to happy unison of soul;
To whose exalting eye a fairer world,
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,

Displays

Displays its charms; whose minds are richly
fraught

With philosophic stores, superior light;
And in whose breast, enthusiastic, burns
Virtue, the sons of interest deem romance;
Now call'd abroad enjoy the falling day.

Now to the verdant portico of woods,
To nature's vast lyceum, forth they walk;
By that kind school where no proud master
reigns;

The full free converse of the friendly heart,
Improving and improv'd.

ABOUT half past *seven*, we return home, and
most commonly between eight and nine, call our
family together, to praise the GOD of our mer-
cies for the blessings of the past day, beg his for-
giveness for the sins of it, and implore the con-
tinuance of his providential care and protection
through the night;* after which we go to supper,
and about half after *ten*, retire to rest, while health
surrounds

* A person fond of reading and meditation, of a *serious*
disposition, and who has a taste for *poetry, painting, music,*
drawing, and the like, may always find employment, though
retired from business; and is best suited to lead a life of *solitude*
without weariness, indolence, or inactivity.

surrounds our dwelling, and silence invites repose.

I remain,

DORKING,

Dear friend,

Aug. 24.

Your's sincerely.

LETTER X.

From the same. *Wherein he further urges his arguments in defence of a retired life, and concludes with an account of a set of poor country people he had determined to relieve.*

DEAR FRIEND,

IN answer to your question (what would become of trade and commerce, were all men in business not only as fond of *retirement* as I am, but left town to enjoy it?) I reply, as it hath pleased the Creator in infinite wisdom to give a different set of features to every man, whereby he may be distinguished from the rest of his fellow-creatures with facility and ease, to prevent that confusion, and those numerous mistakes, which must unavoidably arise from too great a similarity of persons, and resemblance of countenances among men; so he hath

hath very wisely ordained in the course of his providence, different *tempers, dispositions, and inclinations* to different persons according to the several stations in which he hath placed them in the world; that contentment and satisfaction may not be peculiar to *one* station only, but attainable in *all*.

FROM hence it is, that we often see the laborious hind, who may well be said to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, as contented (if not far more so) when following the plough, as the king upon his throne, surrounded by all that the heart can wish, want, or desire, to make it happy; hence it is, that the servant is as easy in a state of servitude, as the master in that of independance; or the meanest vassal as satisfied in his daily toil, as the wealthy lord in the enjoyment of riches, grandeur, and magnificence.

IN some, *ambition*, or love of glory, stimulates to warlike and heroic actions; in others, *avarice*, or desire of riches, provokes to industry, diligence, and application; *necessity* obliges many to pursue labour, whilst *inclination* prompts others to seek retirement. That there will always be a sufficient number, ready and willing to attend to and prosecute the concerns of trade, need not be doubted;

O

therefore

therefore your question in your last must naturally fall to the ground.

INDEED had there been any likelihood of my having many children, I should have esteemed it my duty to have continued in business, in order to be enabled to lay up something for each of them, suitable to the education they might receive, and their several stations in life. But as there was nothing of this sort, and enjoying at present an easy fortune, with an inclination for rural solitude and retirement, in which Eliza seemed to join with me, unambitious of shining in the ball-room, frequenting public diversions, or glittering at court, I thought I might indulge myself herein, without the least deviation from the rules of religion and morality.

I BELIEVE I forgot to mention in my last, the set of *weekly* pensioners I have chosen to partake of a dinner and one shilling each, every Friday throughout the winter, and once a month in the summer, with this addition, the 3d of Nov. the day on which my dear partner and I were united, (now sixteen years since) they are to have *half a crown* a piece given them, to remember the happy day.* This resolution we intend as a token of our
thankfulness

* A laudable example, worthy imitation; where God has given riches, *Charity* and *Thankfulness* should abound.

thankfulness for the mercies we enjoy, and the grateful sense we retain of the Almighty's goodness towards us: for how can the favourites of heaven better shew their gratitude for the bounties of Providence, than in songs of praise to GOD, and charity to men, according to that text of scripture, *To whom much is given, much is required*; or in what manner can we better please Him who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not, than in contributing freely to the wants and necessities of our fellow creatures in distress? I look on the rich and affluent, as the almoners or stewards of the Most High, and therefore cannot but think it their duty, to share their temporal blessings with them to whom they are denied, assured of the truth of the prophet's words, *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.*

UNIVERSAL benevolence or philanthropy, teaches us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and do to others even as we would have them do unto us, knowing that our great Lord and Master, speaking of charity, saith, *Forasmuch as ye do it*

O 2

unto

* Teach me what all believe, but few possess,
That life's best science is *ourselves to know*;
The first of human blessings is to *bless*,
And happiest he who feels *another's woe.*

Cooper.

unto the least of these little ones, ye do it unto me.
But I will not detain you any longer at present.

I remain,

DORKING,

Sept. 9.

Dear friend,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XI.

*From Miss B. to a young lady in town, inviting her
to spend the summer with her in the country, with
a description of the pleasures of rural solitude.*

DEAR CHARLOTTE,

YOU cannot surely be so immersed in the amusements of the town, as to dislike a short relaxation from them, for a few weeks, during the summer, to oblige a distant, though *sincere* friend, with your agreeable company. I know you too well to suppose you can be so swallowed up with balls, plays, or masquerades, as to forget your real well-wishers in the country; no, Charlotte, I have not yet, and hope never shall have the least reason to harbour such a thought of you; to prevent which, let me beg your acceptance of my invitation to
favour

favour me with an early and long visit in ———
shire; where, if a cordial reception and friendly
treatment can prevail with you to comply with my
request, I shall certainly expect to see you in *three*
weeks time.

THE pleasures of the country are now daily in-
creasing, whilst the diversions of the town are
lessening apace; the weather is too warm for as-
semblies, routs, or plays, and the lengthening
days invite to rural scenes. Come then and spend
the sultry hours with me, secured from heat by
lofty spreading elm trees, near the pleasing mur-
murs of a neighbouring stream. Here you may,
unmolested, enjoy the concert of the groves, and
view the works of nature and art without annoy.

HERE, far removed from the noise of carts and
coaches, the smoke of London, and the hurry of
trade, we may spend the passing hours in improv-
ing and agreeable converse, or when the weather
permits, in *riding, walking, fishing*, and the like
rural and healthy exercises. Permit me to tran-
scribe some lines written a few weeks ago by a
young gentleman in our neighbourhood, entitled,
The Pleasures of the Country, with which I will
conclude my present dull performance.

When ruddy morn unbars the gates of light,
And op'ning prospects catch the pilgrim's sight
From yonder hills; the birds on ev'ry spray,
In tuneful accents hail the new-born day;
The fields and meadows, wet with evening dews,
Like diamonds glitter with unnumber'd hues;
But soon (as beauteous charms which men adore)
The heat encreasing, they are seen no more.

Now to their flocks the shepherds swift repair,
While gentle zephyrs fan the balmy air;
The busy bees their daily toil renew,
And lab'ring ants their different cares pursue.

Now is the time to walk the distant fields,
While every breeze a sweeter fragrance yields,
To view the beauties of the rising morn,
And tread the plains which numerous flocks
adorn;
To pass through meadows where the lambkins
play,
Or o'er yon hills pursue my early way.
When noon arrives, O say, my tender friend,
On whom may every earthly bliss descend,
(My fair Belinda: whose is every grace
That charms the soul or can adorn the face)
O say, how welcome are those cool retreats,
Where we have oft (secur'd from sultry heats
By lofty trees, amongst the sweetest flow'rs)

In pleasing converse spent the noon-tide hours ;
 Or coolly seated near a neighb'ring brook,
 We've read by turns some chosen fav'rite book*
 Of *Hervy, Milton, Thomson, Pope, or Gay,*
 Or else in angling past the time away.

WHEN evening comes, how charming 'tis to
 hear

The tuneful songs which strike the list'ning ear,
 From yonder grove ; whilst every breeze is still,
 And echo bears the notes from hill to hill.
 When night returns, how pleasing to behold
 The sky enlighten'd as with studs of gold ;
 To view the moon begin her nightly round,
 And shed her pallid lustre o'er the ground ;
 How blest to sleep secure from noise and strife ;
 Such are the pleasures of a *country* life.

I remain,

HARLING,
June 8.

Dear Charlotte,
 Your's sincerely.

* A friend, a book, the stealing hours secure,
 And mark them down for wisdom. *Thomson's Seasons.*

LETTER XII.

From Florimond to Alexander, his nephew, advising him against the temptations to which his age and situation exposed him.

DEAR NEPHEW,

AS I not only have a great regard for you, but would willingly manifest it on every suitable occasion; permit me to address you, as one who has both your temporal and eternal interest at heart; as one who has not only past through, but is well acquainted with the snares and temptations your age and station expose you to; hear what the wise man saith; and lay up his admonitions in thine heart; *Receive my instruction, and not silver; and wisdom rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than riches.*

PROVIDENCE has placed you in a very promising situation in life, though surrounded with temptations and encompassed with allurements.*

Remem-

* Young people, especially the sons and daughters of affluence, cannot be too circumspect, watchful, and determined, with

Remember you are young ; your indulgent father was taken from you in a very early period, but your tender and affectionate mother is still continued, I doubt not, as a great blessing : Oh ! be concerned to prove the same to her ; endeavour, by your dutiful and endearing behaviour, to make up (as far as lies in your power) the loss of her much lov'd partner and companion. All her hopes are fixed on you, that you will be a comfort and blessing to her, whilst he is mouldering in the dust ; let your actions prove you worthy of those several amiable characters, which the Almighty has given you the opportunity of supporting as a man and Christian ; I mean a dutiful son, a tender husband, an indulgent parent, a worthy master, and a sincere friend ; by so doing you will gain universal love, and recommend yourself to the favour and approbation of your GOD.*

As youth is the time when appetites and passions are strong ; too apt to govern, and too often lead astray

with the assistance of divine grace, to resist satan, and fear the Lord ; their temptations being stronger, and more numerous than others.

* *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me* Spoken by God himself, under the metaphor of wisdom. Prov. viii. 17.

allray from the paths of innocence and virtue, let me persuade you, my dear Alcander, to take heed unto your steps that you slip not; beware of the *first* enticements to sin, those which you may be apt improperly to call *little* sins, and which you may be led to think GOD will take no notice of; what these are, I leave your own conscience to inform you. Remember that truly just observation of a Latin author,

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus,

which is thus englished by Mr. Pope in his Essay on Man, epistle ii. line 207.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first *endure*, then *pity*, then *embrace*.

ALWAYS retain a deep sense of your inability to think a good thought, or speak a right word of *yourself*, and look up to heaven daily for guidance and direction, according to Solomon's admonition to his son, in the third of the Proverbs and the sixth, *In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy steps.*

LET

LET the assurance of the omniscience and omnipresence of JEHOVAH in all places, and at all times (for darkness is the same as noon-day to Him) keep you ever upon your guard, preserve you from sinful compliances and prevent your falling; so that when satan or the world may tempt you to gratify your youthful appetites or passions, by suggesting, now is a fine opportunity, no one sees you, do it now or never; you may be enabled to say with pious Joseph, *How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against GOD?**

WITH respect to your business, be concerned to make it a *pleasure*, not pleasure your business; as a tradesman, be diligent, honest, sober, and attentive; leave as little as possible to servants, knowing that the master's eye makes the horse fat. As a Christian, be humble and vigilant in all your actions; *Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation, for your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

MAKE the scriptures the rule of your conduct and the welfare of your immortal soul your chief concern. I wish you well; let me hear from you often,

* Genesis xxxix. 9.

often, and see you whenever it is convenient. I hope your dear and worthy mother is well ; tell her I expect a long visit from her this summer, or shall think she has quite forgot me.

ASHTED, near *Epsom*,
July 20.

I remain,

Your affectionate Uncle.

LETTER XIII.

From Philander to Aristus, a merchant ; with an account of his brother's death, and the great change it had wrought in him ; with the speech his brother made just before his dissolution.

HOWEVER, my dear friend, you may be wholly taken up with the concerns of business, or pursuits after pleasure and festivity (while you sail down the tide of affluence with a brisk gale, without a thought of, or preparation for an approaching storm, as certain and unavoidable, as it is destructive both to passenger and vessel) permit me to remind you, without offence, that you are mortal ; that after all your toil and anxiety for encreasing riches,

riches, and the meat which periseth, you must ere long die, and leave them to those, who, it may be, will have the greatest reason, in the end, to wish they had never had them.

You will, I doubt not, be much surprized to read such a grave unfashionable letter from one, who has so often wrote to you upon the most gay and dissipated topics ; but your wonder will cease when I tell you my brother died yesterday morning in all the agonies of sorrow and despair : he who was so lately my chief companion in vice and sensuality, and who at first persuaded me to join with him in his follies and extravagance, is now no more. *You* well know how he lived, and *I*, how he died ; his groans still sound in my ears, and his last words dwell with horror in my mind.

OH ! Sir, though we may at present revel in sin, and account religion no better than a fable, and think futurity an idle tale ; there is, I am persuaded, a time coming, when we shall awake out of this pleasing dream, and experience our fatal delusion, (God grant it may not be too late.) That remarkable line in Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, which I was a witness to the truth of yesterday,

Men may *live* fools, but fools they cannot *die*,

P

has,

has, I hope, convinced me of the error of my ways, and brought me to reflect on my past life with contrition.

My brother was taken ill last Sunday, with a violent fever, occasioned (the physician apprehends) by excessive drinking; as the Friday before, he spent the evening with several of his unthinking associates, and did not return home till between one and two the next morning, much disguised in liquor. As it happened, I was prevented from accompanying him *that* evening, or I might have been as bad myself.

BEING the *eldest* son, my father (as is commonly done, but for what reason I will not pretend to say) left him the greatest share of his estate; which he has very considerably lessened by his expensive way of living, being brought up to no business* (another vulgar error) and having no relish for the rational amusements of life, but wholly given up to idleness and dissipation.† He was
never

* Well may it be said, and this person's actions confirm'd it, *an idle man is the devil's play-fellow.*

† However parents may have fortunes sufficient to place their sons in stations of *affluence*, above the necessity of attending

never happier in his own opinion, than when in the pursuit of sensual pleasures, the ruin of innocence, or the intoxicating fumes of the bowl. Happy, thrice happy for me, had I looked on his vices with as much detestation and abhorrence, before I listened to his destructive admonitions and followed his destructive courses, as I do now ; but oh ! with what heart-felt concern, I often recollect those expressive lines, and by sad experience, am too well convinced of their veracity,

*“ He that once sins, like him who slides on ice,
 “ Goes swiftly down the slippery paths of vice ;
 “ Though conscience checks him, yet those rubs get
 o’er,
 “ He sins securely and looks back no more.”**

Dryden.

DELUDED with a false notion of pleasure, my youth got the better of my reason ; and I was led captive by—I tremble at the thought, my *own brother* ; he whom I should have last suspected of

P 2

being

tending to the concerns of *trade* ; they ought always to bring them up to some avocation or employment ; the reason is obvious, *idleness* is the bane of youth.

* These lines can never be too often recollected, nor too carefully attended to, especially by youth.

being my seducer into ruin ; he who might have been my greatest friend ; but oh ! with what horror must I think, was my greatest *enemy*.—But he is gone, and I forgive him ; may **GOD** forgive him. However, his wicked life was my only copy, may his death be *my* everlasting advantage, and his unspeakable and eternal gain.

THE words he uttered just before his dissolution, in a flood of tears, were to this purpose, addressing himself to me : “ Oh ! Philander, my only and much-lov'd brother, 'twas me, wretched and undone creature as I am, that in your early years drew you into sin—not satisfied with being ruined myself, I took all the pains I could, to bring *you* into the same condemnation. You have the greatest reason to hate, to *curse* me ; but I sincerely beg pardon of **GOD**, of *you*, and my own soul. Pray for me if you can, though I don't deserve it ; pity me, lost and *forever* miserable as I must be (if the Almighty does not forgive me.) I have lived unmindful of the only thing that could make a dying bed, in any measure calm and easy.”——

“ I HAVE forgot **GOD**, and now what can
“ I expect but that he will forget me ; for though
“ he

" he is merciful, he must and will be *just*.* Oh!
 " my dear Philander, be assured from the last
 " words of a brother (if I deserve that title) on
 " the verge of immortality, nothing can yield
 " you the least consolation, in the views of the
 " grave, but religion—*that religion which I have*
 " totally disregarded, and taught *you* to ridicule
 " and despise. ———

" HAPPY for me, if the pains I now feel,
 " and the raging burnings of my present disease,
 " could atone for the profligacy of my past conduct,
 " and exempt me from that flaming fire which
 " *never* shall be quenched; but no, they cannot,
 " it is impossible. I am now fully convinced of the
 " truth of that observation, *He that swims in sin*
 " *shall sink in sorrow*. Oh! let my death, which you
 " will soon be a witness of, lead you to consider
 " before it is too late, that there is a *future* never-
 " ending state of happiness and misery beyond the
 " grave, awaiting all: that virtue and piety alone

P 3

" can

* For goodness in excess must be a sin,
 Justice must tame, whom mercy cannot win.

Earl of Halifax.

A God all mercy is a God unjust.

Young.

" can lead you to the *first*,* and vice and sensuality bring you to the latter.† Farewell—
 " for ever."————

HERE he was overwhelmed with grief, and about an hour after expired——Forgive my tears, for I really loved him. I cannot proceed——

MANCHESTER,

Sept. 15.

Adieu,

Your's, Philander.

LETTER XIV.

From Miss R. to a young lady in the country, describing the pleasures and amusements of the town, contrasted with those of a country life.

DEAR FRIEND,

FORGIVE me if I say I envy your situation, surrounded with the innocent delights and enjoying

* Our life is short, but to extend that span,
 To vast eternity, is *Virtue's* work.

Shakespeare.

† A sure reward awaits on virtuous deeds,
 But vice to mis'ry and destruction leads.

ing the undisturbed tranquillity of the country, whilst I (much against my inclination) am daily hurried from one insipid diversion to another, merely to please the fancy of a near relation, under whose care (she having taken a great liking to me) my father hath thought proper to place me. Her name is Alton, a maiden lady, about *forty*, with a very genteel fortune; and I must confess, uses me as well and tenderly as if I was her own daughter, though through a mistaken propensity to gaiety and parade, keeps a great number of servants, frequents public diversions, and dresses both herself and me in the richest silks she can procure. It may be you think, I ought not, out of gratitude for her kindness, to complain of her; I should not, did her taste lay a different way from what it does, if she evidenced as much concern for the improvement of my *mind*, as she is solicitous for the adorning of my body, and giving me a taste for the several amusements in vogue; but oh! my dear Cephisa, seldom or never do these interesting topics come upon the carpet.

A COMPLAINT of this nature from a young woman in the bloom of life, is very uncommon I own, and might appear rather ridiculous and methodistical to the greatest part of mankind; but to you, who have had a *religious* education, and
been

been brought up in the same manner with myself. I am certain it must seem too melancholy and affecting, to be passed over in silence. But you may probably ask, if the way of life I am now in, is so disagreeable to me, why don't I mention it to my father? Undoubtedly I should, had I not some reason to hope it would soon be altered; for the summer being far advanced, Mrs. Alton talks of going out of town in about a fortnight's time, to spend the remainder of it at her country seat in Warwickshire, a delightful place indeed; (I was there last summer upon a visit with my father.)

THE gardens are laid out in the most rural manner I ever saw: here I promise myself some pleasure, even in the thought of being deprived the opportunity of frequenting public diversions, and entirely secluded from the smoke and noise of London. But what will greatly tend to lessen the felicity of my rural situation is, the sad reflection of being so far distant from my father, brother, and sisters, and deprived of the company of my dear engaging friend; yet this I cannot but persuade myself, will be in some measure made up by the instructive and obliging correspondence of both parties.

WHEN in town, you did, and I know would
often

often have called on me had I continued there ; but soon we shall be at so great a distance from each other, that I *must* not, nor *cannot reasonably* expect it. At present I am chiefly taken up in reading *Clarissa*, *Grandison*, &c. to my fair guardian ; or going in the evening to *Vauxhall*, *Ranelagh*, &c. where the height of the pleasure is reckoned to consist in *seeing* and being *seen* ; but you need not be informed what diversions these places afford, having been at each of them yourself, and left them without the least concern or regret, as a sad contrast to the unmolested retirement of rural solitude. I am,

QUEEN-SQUARE,

July 8th.

My dear friend,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XV.

From Cleander, in rural scenes, to Philos, in the capitol, with an ode on health, which he wrote in one of his evening walks.

DEAR FRIEND,

THOUGH in the midst of every pleasure that sylvan retirement can afford, I cannot rest satisfied without

without writing to you, that I may have the wished-for opportunity of perusing your entertaining letters, fraught with all that elegance of style and perspicuity of composition, which runs (in so eminent a manner) through your literary productions. You may believe me (for flattery is my aversion) nothing can add more to my present retired happiness than the company and conversation of my dear friend, and when unavoidably deprived of these, the receipt of his useful and amusing epistles.

My present situation, as it secludes me from the noise and hurry of a crowded city, and leaves me to my own reflections without disturbance, suits far better with my inclination, than my former way of life, but has this inconvenience attending it, preventing me seeing my friends as often as I could wish; which can only be alleviated in *some* measure by their kind correspondence: this, as it is in their power to favour me with, I hope to enjoy whenever opportunity suits, with that inward pleasure and delight, which true friendship alone can relish or afford.

I HAVE just been taking a serious walk in one of the finest evenings the summer has afforded; the verdant fields, the flowery meadows, and the warbling

warbling songsters of the groves, all conspired to render walking pleasant and agreeable.* My reflections as I passed along, were on the wonderful works of GOD in the creation, and the greatness of the blessing of a good state of health,† without which all nature would be but as a blank, and every enjoyment useless and insipid. (a)

WHOLLY swallowed up in these pleasing contemplations, I sat down on a grassy hillock, by the side of an hedge intermingled with various sweet-smelling flowers; and in the height of a poetical reverie, wrote the following lines, which I take the liberty of sending you for your perusal and opinion of; I stile them,

AN

* The lawns, the groves, the verdant fields,
Each object rural nature yields,
Are form'd to please and give delight,
To calm the mind, and charm the sight.

† Well does a late eminent poet stile it,

The salt of life, which does to all a relish give.

Cowley.

(4) Mankind, as you vouchsafe to smile or frown,
Find ease in chains, or anguish in a crown,

Garth.

AN ODE ON HEALTH.

I.

HEALTH is a rich and heav'nly gift
Descending from on high ;
Which empty titles cannot gain,
Nor fordid riches buy.

II.

Health is the parent of content,
Composer of our strife ;
Adds sweetness to our joys below,
Without it, what is life ?

III.

Health is the child of temperance,
And prudence is its nurse ;
To *worldly* men, depriv'd of this,
Existence seems a curse.

IV.

Health is the sunshine of the soul,
And body's sweet repose ;
In measure 'twill remove our griefs,
And soften all our woes.

V. Health

V.

Health is a blessing highly priz'd,
 By those who know its loss ;
 Without it, honours, wealth, and fame,
 Are vain and empty dross.

VI.

Health is the rich man's needed friend,
 The poor, their only wealth ;
 'Twill double all enjoyments here,
 So great a blessing's health.

VII.

For ever praise the LORD, my soul,
 For this his gift to me ;
 Oh ! may his praises be my theme,
 Thro' all eternity.

I FEAR I have already tired your patience, or
 would have sent you my thoughts on this subject
 in prose ; at present permit me to conclude with
 stiling myself,

Your real friend and

Sincere well-wisher to command,

TOTNESS, *Devonshire*,

CLEANDER.

July 10.

Q

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

From Miss L. to a young Lady in town, giving an account of a gentleman's falling in love with her sister, who was married; concluding with an ode on Friendship, which he sent her inclosed in a letter, lamenting his imprudence in the most pathetic terms.*

MY DEAR BELINDA,

FORGIVE me troubling you with the following story, which, however affecting, is too true, and has caused my sister much sorrow and concern.

A young gentleman in our neighbourhood, greatly beloved and respected by all his acquaintance, came to see my brother about six weeks ago, for the first time since his marriage. It happened that

* The author is very sorry the above letter has been thought censurable, as it was inserted merely for the sake of the arguments it contains, to discourage those libertine principles, so fashionably prevalent in the present wicked and adulterous generation.

that he was out ; my sister, as she knew who he was, and on what account he came, begged him to stay, telling him she expected Mr. ——— home in half an hour's time. He complied, and entered into a very pleasing conversation with my sister and me, on the happiness of a country life, and the benefits of solitude and retirement ; which subjects he discussed in such a sensible and entertaining manner, that could not fail of being agreeable to both of us. He drank tea, and staid till between seven and eight o'clock, when Mr. ——— not coming home, he took his leave, begging his compliments to him, and that he would call another time.

ABOUT a week afterwards he came again, and found my brother at home ; this afternoon he was dressed extremely genteel indeed, and being a tall, likely young man, looked to great advantage. Mr. ——— received him with all the politeness of a courtier, and at the same time with the pleasure and affection of a real friend. They conversed together I believe till near nine o'clock in the evening ; my sister and I were in the room most of the time, and he was observed often to smile at my sister and direct his discourse to her ; but this was thought nothing particular of, as my brother knew him to be a sober and deserving young gentleman :

tleman : however, when he went away, he gave my sister one or two very expressive and tender looks (unobserved by Mr. ——) which put her into great confusion.

He repeated his visits every week afterwards, till within these few days, under pretence of just calling as he went by ; always enquiring how Mrs. —— did, if he did not happen to see her ; which made me suspicious there was something more in his visits, than either of us at first thought of ; though he always behaved in a becoming manner, and seemed only desirous of being accounted a *friend*. Indeed he used often to ask my brother to make a party with my sister and me, and spend a day or two with him at his country house in Oxfordshire (an estate his father left him about a year and a half ago) which Mr. —— promised to do before the end of the summer ; but to our great surprize, my sister received a letter yesterday morning, which, when she opened, she found was from *him*. As it may be your desire to know the contents of it, I send you the following copy, together with some verses which were inclosed ; begging the favour of you not to shew them to any one, as my sister is desirous to have them kept a secret from the world ; lest Mr. —— hearing of it, should make himself uneasy on the account.

“ Too

" Too amiable Maria,

" THE heart-felt pleasure and satisfaction I
 " have lately enjoyed in your agreeable company
 " and converse, too plainly evinces the ardour of
 " my affection for *one*, who (as she is unalterably
 " engaged for life) cannot with the least pretence
 " to prudence and discretion, make any returns
 " for such an unhappy passion; which though I
 " know and acknowledge to be improperly fixt
 " upon so unwarrantable an object, yet am not able
 " to subdue it; such (too dear Maria) is the force
 " of youthful esteem, too early cherished and im-
 " bibed in a tender breast, and so imprudently en-
 " couraged. I condemn myself a thousand times
 " for having given it the least room, in my more
 " thoughtful moments,* especially as I am con-
 " vinced of its unlawfulness,† and how contrary
 " it is to those sacred principles I have been edu-
 " cated in and profess to follow.

Q 3

" BUT

* This reminds me of the poet's experience, as happily expressed in the following couplet:

I know what's right, and I approve it too;
 Condemn what's wrong, and yet what's wrong pursue.

† Love must be sin where 'tis a sin to love.

“ BUT what shall I, what can I say? To attempt to excuse myself, would only be to aggravate my crime; to endeavour to extenuate its guilt, the means of making it appear the blacker: all that I can offer in my own defence, I am certain, is only the pleadings of corrupt nature; and that common observation, we cannot command our passions. But however frequently this may be adopted by the sensualists of the age, yet how vain and insignificant must it appear in the eyes of sensible (not to say) religious men! such language is a questioning the Almighty's wisdom in the formation of our passions, and murmuring at his works, as though they were imperfect, which is as impious as it is absurd, and borders upon infidelity, immorality, and profaneness.——

“ THE prudent behaviour with which you have always treated me, has made me appear ridiculous even to myself, and the proper object of your just contempt and hatred: had you behaved otherwise, we both might have been ruined; but that respectful distance and veneration your words and actions inculcated and enforced, has been, I hope, the means of reclaiming me from the most iniquitous pursuits, and taught me, my own weakness, folly and imprudence,

“ dence, in encouraging an esteem so opposite to
“ every law, human and divine.

“ THAT you are worthy of the best of hus-
“ bands, I am fully persuaded, and happy in see-
“ ing you possess of ; but oh ! how often do I re-
“ pent the moment I first admitted this puerile
“ esteem to take place and destroy my peace ?
“ how have I struggled with myself to overcome
“ it, but in vain ! all the arguments that conscience
“ alledged against it, every consideration religion
“ afforded to dissuade me from it, were fruitless
“ and ineffectual.

“ I HAVE for some weeks past indulged an af-
“ fection I cannot but disapprove, and am fully
“ convinced of my error, without a power to re-
“ form ; * with what readiness have I argued
“ against it, and painted its odiousness in the
“ strongest colours, but to no purpose ; the tumult
“ of my troubled mind increases daily, and what
“ will be consequence I cannot tell, where it will
“ end, GOD only knows. Conscious that I de-
“ serve

* However men may boast of their being free agents, it is too evident, agreeable to the declarations of the sacred scriptures, that while they are naturally prone to do evil, *to do good they have no power.* Romans vii. 18, 19. Jeremiah iv. 22.

SYLVAN LETTERS.

“ serve your scorn, I stand self-condemned ; but
“ if your relenting disposition can pity my deplo-
“ rable situation, I earnestly intreat your com-
“ passion and forgiveness. Your good sense and
“ affability, together with your agreeable person
“ and address, all conspire against me, and every
“ renewed visit does but heighten my esteem, in
“ opposition to that indifference it is my duty to
“ encourage. As yet, I have (in some measure)
“ stifled my passion ; should it encrease, I must
“ tear myself from you—forever. Your accept-
“ ance of the following lines, written on your fa-
“ vourite subject, will be the only favour I shall
“ ever presume to ask ; and greatly oblige one,
“ whom you know nothing worse of, than his fix-
“ ing his affections upon you.”

AN ODE ON FRIENDSHIP.

I.

Friendship, thou dear and much lov'd name,
Assist my early lays ;
Inspir'd with thy angelic flame,
I fain would sing thy praise.

O thou

O thou inestimable gift to men,
Celestial goddess! aid my feeble pen.

II.

Friendship, thou balm of every woe,
And softner of our pains ;
Who heightens all our joys below,
Forgive these humble strains ;
Oh! speak the blessings which thy steps attend,
Say what's contain'd in that one word—a *Friend*.

III.

Friendship alone in deep distress,
Will ease the painful heart ;
For every trouble seems the less,
When friendship bears a part.*
She stops the progress of increasing strife,
And adds new relish to the sweets of life.

IV.

Friendship alone in every grief
Partakes a willing share ;
In sickness yields a kind relief,
And comforts in despair.

When

* Who knows the joys of friendship ?
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,
The double joys, where each is glad for both. *Rowe.*

When thro' unseen misfortunes wealth declines,
In poverty *true* friendship brightest shines.

V.

Friendship the sinking spirits cheers,
And stills the anxious breast ;
In danger will remove our fears,
And give our sorrows rest.
Tho' sore afflictions seize the vital frame,
Friendship remains unchangeably the same.

VI.

Friendship in every state and age,
Will ever welcome prove ;
The mind with all its powers engage,
And melt the soul to love.
O sing her praise, ye angels ! tell her worth ;
A life of friendship is a heav'n on earth.*

Your

* Celestial Happiness, whene'er she stoops
To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,
And one alone, to make her sweet amends
For absent heav'n---the bosom of a *friend*;
Where heart meets heart reciprocally soft,
Each other's pillow to repose divine.

YOUR patience, my dear Belinda, must be greater than Job's, not to be quite exhausted in reading so long an epistle ; therefore, *sans ceremonie*, adieu.

BRISTOL, July 16.

E. L—.

LETTER XVII.

From Miss L. to a relation in town, giving an account of the death of an amiable young lady, an intimate friend of her's, with an epitaph made on her, by a young gentleman in the neighbourhood.

DEAR COUSIN,

IT may be you have heard of the death of my intimade friend Miss M. but lest you should not, I take this opportunity to inform you she died last Tuesday, about four o'clock in the afternoon. She was taken ill the Wednesday before with a violent cold, which terminated in a high fever the Saturday following. At times she was delirious, but when in her senses, no one could be more patient and resigned,

HER sister (by her desire) sent for me last Sunday,

just as I came from church in the morning ; I saw their man coming along, and overtaking me as I got to our door, he told me his message with seemingly great concern ; the substance of which was, that Miss M. was extremely ill indeed, and desired to see me to take her leave of me, as she did not expect to live but a few hours. You may be sure the news filled me with sorrow, anxiety, and surprize ; as I was with her but the Tuesday before, when she was quite chearful and well. After acquainting my father with the message, I went immediately to their house ; and being conducted by a weeping servant to the melancholy chamber, found Mrs. L. her sister, sitting by the bed-side, dissolved in tears. The physician had been there and was just gone, after having pronounced the fever dangerous.

As soon as she saw me, she attempted to speak, but the violence of her grief stopped her utterance, and after waving her hand three or four times, lost her senses, and raved for about ten minutes ; then fell into a gentle doze and slept near half an hour. When she awaked she seemed better, but very low ; on seeing how much the sight of me affected her, I thought it most proper to go into another room till she recovered herself, which I did. —

WHEN she found me gone, she asked her sister
where

where I was, and being told, desired with great earnestness to see me. When I went to the bedside to her, she took hold of my hand, and said, looking on me with much tenderness and concern,—"My *dear, dear* friend, little did I think last Tuesday of your seeing me so soon, in the alarming situation I am now in; but we know not what a day may bring forth. Forgive my sending for you, to behold a sight, the most painful and distressing to human nature, the dying agonies of (one I know you account) a dear friend; but it was my strong affection for you, which made it impossible for me to think of leaving all things here, without taking a last, a *long* farewell of you.

DEATH appears not terrible to me, but the parting with those whom I truly love, and by whom I know myself beloved, cuts me to the heart."—Here she was again overcome with grief, and unable to proceed; upon which, telling her I would return in a short time, I left her and went home, with eyes swollen with tears, and a heart big with sorrow.

ON calling the next morning to know how she did, they informed me she was worse, the fever greatly encreased, and very little in her senses. I thought it would be of no service to go up to see

R

her,

her, therefore I went back again, and as soon as I got into my room, gave way to a genuine and unfeigned concern. Monday night the physician said she would change very soon for the better or worse, which she did *indeed*, about four o'clock on Tuesday morning, when she appeared on the verge of her dissolution; and continued growing worse till the time she died; taking leave of her sister about three o'clock in the afternoon, in a very affectionate and pathetic manner, and desiring her to tell *me*, she hoped to renew our friendship in heaven.

About half an hour after, she was in extreme pain, in the height of which she calls out to her sister, "My dear Betsy, join with me in praying for the best of blessings on my dear father; you; my dear friend Miss I. and all mankind;" then taking hold of her hand, kissed her several times heartily; and lifting up her eyes and hands, with her sister's inclosed in them, to heaven, she attempted to pray; but the violence of her disorder took away her senses, and she continued so till her death.—

HER sister never left her room from the time I was there on Sunday. I cannot but sympathize with her, for she is quite inconsolable. The following elegy was made on her by a young gentleman in the neighbourhood, which (as it appears
the

the real dictates of sympathetic friendship and esteem) I send for your perusal and opinion of.

THE author is to be supposed sitting in a thoughtful posture, but on hearing the bell toll from a neighbouring steeple, starts, and says,

What sounds are these which strike my list'ning
ears,

Awake my sorrows and alarm my fears,
From yonder steeple? 'Tis the dismal knell
Of some departed spirit; who can tell
But now the deathless being dwells above,
In endless regions of eternal love?
(Beyond the reach of every human pain,
Whose loss to friends, is her superior gain.)
It does, for oh!—the dear *Maria's* dead;
To realms of joy the blessed spirit's fled.

SHE's gone, she's gone; assist my feeble lays,
Ye sacred nine, to sing her matchless praise
In plaintive strains. Oh! lend your skilful aid,
Celestial muses, every tuneful maid
Join in the mournful song; with grief deplore,
Maria's dead, and beauty is no more,
Maria's dead, repeat from shore to shore.

Maria's dead, in doleful accents cry,
 Maria's dead let hills and dales reply ;^{*}
 Ye neighb'ring meads, the sadd'ning message tell,
 Maria's gone, ye green retreats farewell ;
 Ye pleasant fields, where oft she us'd to stray,
 Be cloth'd no more in summer's bright array ;
 Ye lofty trees, without your leaves appear,
 Maria's gone, be winter all the year ;
 Ye shady groves in wither'd garbs deplore,
 Maria's gone, and verdure is no more.

But oh ! what words can paint the *sister's* grief,
 Or yield the weeping fair the least relief ?
 Too lovely mourner, speak her real worth,
 Who shar'd her best affections while on earth.
 O tell what numbers mourn her early fate,
 How much belov'd in this imperfect state !
 Say, how submissively she bore the rod,
 How soon she gave *herself*, her *all* to GOD.
 Speak thou, who wast till death her greatest friend,
 What numerous sorrows did thy bosom rend,
 When the dread fever rag'd in every vein,
 And reason left her, overwhelm'd in pain ;
 How did her flowing tears thy grief renew,
 When sensible of death, she said—*Adieu* ;

While

^{*} This is imitated from Pope's fourth Pastoral, stiled the Winter.

While pleasing hopes her lively faith supply'd,*
She took her last farewell, and calmly died.

BUT oh! my tender friend, wipe every tear,
For tho' *she's* gone, your *Jesus* still is near;
Then let this thought revive your drooping heart;
You'll meet her soon above, no more to part.

FORGIVE my detaining you so long, and believe me to be with the greatest sincerity,

Your affectionate Cousin.

BISHOP STORTFORD,

Aug. 17.

S. I——.

LETTER XVIII.

*From Sobrina to a friend; in answer to a question,
What pleasures are to be enjoyed in solitude and retirement? with an extract from Thomson's Seasons.*

DEAR MIRA,

THOUGH you are prejudiced in favour of the town, from your fondness of its diversions and

R 3

amuse-

* Faith builds a bridge across the gulf of death,
To break the shock blind nature cannot shun,
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore.

Night Thoughts.

amusements, I can say, from pleasing experience,
with our great poet, Milton,

Solitude sometimes is *best* society.*

You seem to wonder at my dullness of taste, as you are pleased to term it, and would fain persuade me, true pleasures are only to be enjoyed in London. But you must forgive me if I differ from you here: there are pleasures in *solitude* which none but lovers of it know; true felicity has been always esteemed of a *retired* nature, and an enemy to grandeur, pomp, and noise; therefore chiefly found in the silent recesses of the country, where every thing is calculated to instil calmness, serenity, and delight into the thoughtful mind.

BUT it is far above my poor abilities to describe the happiness of rural retirement; therefore, to answer the question in your last, permit me, my dear friend, to transcribe some lines out of my favourite

* O solitude, blest state of life below,
Friend to our thought, and balm of every woe;
Here lust no object for its fires can gain,
And pride wants gazers to admire her train.

Brown.

favourite author, *Thomson*; where, painting the enjoyments of a country life, in his poem on the Autumn, he says,

Oh! knew he but his happiness, of men
The happiest he! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a choice few retir'd,
Drinks the pure pleasures of a rural life.

.

Sure peace is his; a solid life estrang'd
To disappointment, and fallacious hope;
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits; whatever greens the spring,
When heaven descends in showers; or bends
the bough,

When summer reddens, and when autumn
beams;

Or in the wintry glebe whatever lies
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richest sap;
These are not wanting; nor the milky drove,
Luxuriant spread o'er all the lowing vale;
Nor bleating mountains, nor the chide of
streams,

And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere
Into the guiltless breast, beneath the shade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay.
Here too dwells simple truth; plain innocence;
Unfulfilled beauty; sound unbroken youth,

Patient

Patient of labour, with a little pleas'd ;
 Health ever blooming ; unambitious toil ;
 Calm contemplation, and poetic ease.*

FORGIVE the length of this quotation ; but as nothing I ever met with, suits my ideas better of the happiness of solitude, I could not forbear transcribing it at full length. All I wish is, that by reflecting on the justness and propriety of the above description, you may become a profelyte to my way of thinking ; and adopt sentiments worthy the regard of a rational and immortal being, formed for higher and more noble purposes, than to be a slave to pleasure, or the gaze of fools.

I remain,

My dear Mira,

Your's, &c.

FROOME, *Somersetshire,*
June 25.

SOBRINA.

* These are the guiltless joys of rural life,
 Estrang'd to anxious cares, and free from strife.
Retir'd Pleasures.

LETTER XIX.

From Mira to Sobrina, ridiculing her notions of retirement; imitated from Mrs. Rowe's Letters, moral and entertaining.

BLESS me, dear Sobrina, what has turn'd your brain now, all of a sudden? you have got something in your head more than common to be sure, to be so strenuous an advocate for *retirement*, as you call it; Lord! how you talk about it; what in life has possess'd you? to make a solitary recluse of your dear self, late so lively, chearful and gay; now a demure, melancholy (and I could find it in my heart to add) *stupid* creature; in love with nothing but hedges, fields, and green trees; and wrapt up in the devout offices of a female hermit.

WELL, surely you must be bewitched, or out of your senses (the best excuses I can think of) to seclude yourself in the country, far from every thing worth enjoying, at a great distance from your friends and every amusement, and lost to all society, but your rusticated tenants, and the tithe-gathering parson of the parish; a man of no great politeness, I should suppose, from his distance from
town,

town, the centre of all true politeness and good breeding.

I CAN'T imagine, for the life of me, what you find to employ your time in; what can you do with yourself all the live-long day? I should be apt to think you was grown melancholy mad, if I didn't know to the contrary.

YOU, that a year or two ago, was all gaiety and humour, and the life of the company, to bury yourself alive in an old mansion-house, an *hundred* miles from London, merely because your brother died and left you the estate: bless me, my dear Sobrina, do recollect yourself a little, and don't give up all pretensions to social life; don't, for heaven's sake, deprive those who once thought themselves happy in your acquaintance, of the pleasure of your sprightly conversation; what have we all done to deserve this treatment from you? have we forfeited your esteem and friendship by any indiscretion or neglect? —————

BUT it may be some *religious qualm* has come over you, and taken away your relish for the busy world, and all its tumultuous pleasures, to speak in your own language; if that is the case, (tho' I

can

can hardly believe it is) I really pity you from the bottom of my heart, and wish you well out of your *spiritual vapours*; but not to detain you longer from your rural *elysium*, and in the hopes of seeing you (after being heartily sick of retirement) once more make one in the *beau monde*, I remain,

PALL-MALL,
Mond. Afternoon.

Sincerely your's,
MIRA.

P. S. Excuse brevity, as I'm dressing to go with the two Miss M's to Mrs. Cornely's paradise.

LETTER XX.

To Crito, a young gentleman, mourning the loss of an indulgent father.

DEAR SIR,

THE Almighty has in the course of his all-wise dispensations, thought fit to deprive you of a tender indulgent father, whose chief concern was to see you walk in the paths of virtue and religion: one whose precepts and example you will do well
to

to imitate and follow, as a proof of your regard and affection for so valuable a parent.

WEEP you may, I know you cannot refrain, when you think how much he loved you, how earnest and solicitous he was for the advancement and promotion of your temporal and eternal welfare ; but what will tears avail towards making up the loss you have sustained, or lessening the greatness of it ? nothing. He only, who has made you fatherless, can be *more* than a father to you : implore his guidance and protection, make conscience of addressing him at all times and in every trouble ; he will be a GOD at hand, as well as afar off.*

LET the image of the father eminently appear in the life and conversation of the son, and be reflected by his amiable conduct and behaviour ; trust not to your own judgment with respect to affairs of importance ; you have relations and friends, who have your real and best interest at heart ; consult and advise with them ; they have seen and know more of the world than you can possibly be supposed to know, therefore better able

to

* Jeremiah xxiii. 23.

to warn you of the dangers, snares, and temptations, to which you will be unavoidably exposed, and liable to fall into in your passage through life ; observe their admonitions, and value their instructions ;* shew your good sense, prudence, and understanding, by paying a suitable deference and respect to their opinion and counsel.

WALK circumspectly ; *live* holiness as well as *profess* it ; endeavour to be an ornament in the station Providence has placed you ; recommend the doctrines of the gospel to others, by your exemplary walk and conversation ; so shall your father's God be *your* God, and after death, your ever blissful portion, which is the earnest desire and prayer of,

Dear Sir,

HAMPSTEAD,

Your sincere Friend.

Sept. 10.

* In the multitude of counsellors there is safety. Prov. xi. 14.

LETTER XXI.

To Cleanthes, with a specimen of a poem in blank verse, on health and solitude, by a youth.

DEAR FRIEND,

AS I know you are pleased with the productions of younger minds, especially where piety seems to direct the pen ; permit me to send you the following first attempts of a young gentleman, the son of a friend of mine, written (after recovery from a fit of illness) on health and solitude, in blank verse ; which, if it meets with your approbation, shall take the liberty of sending you the remainder of it the first opportunity.

O thou the best of earthly blessings, *Health !*
Celestial gift ! but on a few bestow'd ;
Thou sweetner of our sorrows, hail ! to thee
I dedicate my early lay, and strive to sing,
In humble verse, thy praise, Ye sacred nine,
Harmonic sisters, lend your pleasing aid,
And warm my soul with true poetic fire ;
Teach me to mount as on an eagle's wing,
And catch seraphic ardor from on high.

THE

THE man how blest ! who on some rural plain,
Lives, undisturb'd, from all disorders free ;
Breathes the fresh air, and drinks the cooling spring,
Estrang'd to sickness, and to grief unknown ;
Far from the ceaseless din, the noise and strife
Of crouded cities, and the haunts of trade ;
Where industry unweary'd still pursues,
Thro' every varied scene the means of gain.

THUS let me spend the few remaining hours
Which Providence indulgent may prolong ;
While anxious cares and every sore distress,
Which daily wait on mortals here below,
Reach not the peaceful cottage where I dwell.
What's life ? with all the pleasures of the world,
Without this grand restorative of bliss,
This greatest blessing lent to man below ?
'Tis all a visionary transient good,
Well stil'd a *dream*, a bubble quickly broke,
To every blast expos'd, to every wind
A prey.—Oh ! grant me then, thou great Supreme !
This chief enjoyment to possess it long.
Tho' not a stranger to the numerous pains
Which flesh is subject to, and all the woes
That constant wait on frail mortality.

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NOTTINGHAM,
July 10.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your's to command.

S 2

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

From Raltimond to Florelet, with reflections on the works of Creation, and the weakness of human wisdom ; a fragment.

LOOKING over some papers in my study this morning, I found the following extract from the Ledger, on the works of Creation ; which greatly pleased me, and I doubt not, will be entertaining to my friend ; as it is written in the stile and manner of his favourite author Hervey, and contains sentiments worthy the regard of a man and christian. The time it refers to, being late of a summer's evening, the author introduces it with those elegant lines from Pope's Homer.

. . . The moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure, sheds her sacred light ;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene ;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole.

* “ AMONG all the studies that engage the mind of man, the best adapted to its nature, is that
of

of *Omnipotence* ;* this is a field sufficiently large for the most fertile genius to expand its faculties in ; and affords a serious contemplation to learn its own weakness, and to adore that Almighty Being , who at first spoke the whole creation into existence, and still supports it by the breath of his mouth.

THE other evening, when the last beams of departing day had tinged the fleecy clouds with glowing purple, I left the scenes of mirth and jollity, to enjoy the calmness of the air, and meditate on the wonders of Creation. The moon adorned the chambers of the east, and drew a silver mantle over the verdant carpet of nature. Not the least noise disturbed the solemnity of the scene ; the feathered songsters of the grove were retired to rest, and the herds and flocks were sleeping on the grassy surface of the meadows.

IN this silent and pleasing situation, I directed my eyes towards the azure arch of heaven ; viewed with wonder and admiration the grand theatre of

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the

* The Omnipotence of God, considered as one of the attributes essential to Deity, may afford ample matter for adoration, love, confidence, and praise, to the *real* Christian; while it must inevitably tend to fill the *unbeliever* with consternation, anxiety, and dismay.

the universe, and wandered in idea through the boundless fields of Ether. I particularly remarked some of the planetary globes, which form our solar system, now shining with distinguished lustre; and reflected on the amazing velocity with which they perform their respective orbits round the sun. *

RETIRE into yourselves, ye giddy mortals; think on your own weakness, ignorance, and folly, and you will soon be convinced how unable ye are to oppose the hand that formed universal Nature, or contend with that Wisdom that plann'd its various laws; remember your actions are all exposed to his view, nor are the most secret thoughts of your hearts concealed from his all-searching eye;† the pitchy mantle of the night cannot hide any thing from him: tremble, therefore, ye scoffers at Providence, ye sons of rapine, riot, violence, and wrong; be assured he marks every action of your lives, and will reward ye at last according to
your

* The works of Creation survey'd with seriousness and attention, cannot but evidence not only the being, but the wisdom, providence, goodness, and omnipotence of God.

† Guard well thy thoughts; our thoughts are heard in heaven.

Dr. Young.

your doings.* Vengeance, terrible as the dusty whirlwinds of the Arabian deserts, and sudden as the lightning's flash, will overtake you; and pour on your heads the just indignation of an offended God.

LEAVE then the pursuits of injustice, debauchery, and profaneness; abandon the haunts of drunkenness and sensuality, and retire with me into the sequestered fields; contemplate the works of heaven's Almighty, and you will soon be led to adore the Omnipotent Architect; and be convinced that happiness is only to be found in the paths of virtue and religion."†————

AN

* In a future state and world the threatenings of God shall be all duly executed respecting the wicked; and his promises concerning the righteous punctually fulfilled; or, in other words, the desires of the virtuous shall be completely gratified; the fears of the vicious certainly come to pass; and the soul be forever happy or miserable, according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Rom. ii. 6. John v. 28, 29.

† I have tried what delights are to be found in madness and folly, and am now in pursuit of what wisdom and philosophy can yield. In the fair creation, I trace an Almighty power, and see the immense Divinity impress on all his works.

Mrs. Rowe's Letters.

AN early epistle, with your opinion of the inclosed, will much oblige an old friend in the recesses of sylvan tranquillity.

RYEGATE,
Aug. 28.

• Your's, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

From Miss M. to a relation, informing her how happy she is in her rural situation; with an allegorical vision, shewing the benefits of adversity.

IT may appear very odd to my dear Sophronia, that a young woman, at my time of life, should prefer solitude and retirement, before gaiety and the diversions of the town; and though surrounded with pleasures and amusements, should willingly abandon them all, and declare myself in favour of the country;* but really they appeared to me so trifling

* The candidates for the modish and dissipating pleasures of the present age, are not among the advocates for a country life; the metropolis being the grand rendezvous of gaiety and fashion.

trifling and insipid, that I was quite tired of them ; there was such a sameness in most, and vanity in every scene daily presented to my view, that nothing but my cousin's obliging importunities could have prevailed on me to follow them so long.

HER company and conversation were the greatest happiness I enjoyed in London ; with her I past whole hours in amusing and instructive intercourse ; and experienced more real and inward satisfaction, from the pleasing marks of her friendship and esteem which I continually received, than I possibly could do from sparkling at Vauxhall, or in the crowded rounds of Ranelagh. Her constant endeavours to entertain me by making parties of pleasure, and going to different places of public amusements, whilst they afforded me sufficient opportunities of making proper reflections on each, at the same time convinced me, of her desire and willingness to make my stay in town as agreeable as she could. How happy should I have thought myself, could I have prevailed on her to accompany me into the country ; but with what regret I left her behind, my tears at parting evidenced.

I FOUND but one fault in her, which was her strong attachment to pleasures of a *tumultuous* kind ; while mine were more of a retired nature,
arising

arising from an unconquerable fondness of rural solitude and sylvan contemplations; which I can enjoy in my present situation, unenvied by the great, forsaken by the gay, and undisturbed by all.

SINCE my return to silent groves, and shady bowers, she has favoured me with an account of a very remarkable dream she had one evening; the effects, she apprehends, of a conversation the day before with a friend, on the benefits of adversity; which, as it is peculiarly striking and instructive, I cannot suppose there is any occasion to apologize for inclosing it.

LAST Monday Mrs. R—— called and drank tea with us, when the question was started by my mother (who was then much troubled with a violent pain in her head) Of what benefit is *adversity*,* and wherein can it be stiled useful to men in general?† At night, when I resigned myself to sleep, Fancy resumed her office, and imprest with the above enquiry, transported me in a moment into the most charming meadow I had ever seen. A

mur-

* See Mental Pleasures, vol. II. page 54.

† This dream was really the production of a young lady, and communicated to the author by a female friend.

murmuring stream flowed through the middle of it, and by its refreshing moisture, perpetually renewed it with all the beauties of the spring; the verdure of the ground, the gay flowers with which it was enamelled, the fragrance of the morning air, the sloping beams of the rising sun gilding a thick wood that appeared on one side of the meadow, all conspired to heighten the beauty of the scene, and give alacrity to the spirits. My heart exulted with joy as I pursued the course of the river or stream, which led to the temple situated at a distance on a rising ground; encircled with woodbines, jessamines, and myrtles, whose variegated blossoms cast forth a profusion of mingled sweets. To this temple most travellers who entered the meadow, seemed at first inclined to bend their steps, but I observed scarce any that accomplished their purpose; growing tired with the straightness of the path, they presently quitted it, to ramble in the winding alleys of the neighbouring wood, which promised them greater variety. Some indeed, though but very few, quickly came out again, and followed their first intention of going to the temple; while others, penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, were seen no more.

My curiosity was awakened on seeing such numbers croud the avenues, to enquire where those
several

several paths terminated : and perceiving a person of a grave and studious aspect, whose eyes were fixt on the multitudes before him, as if contemplating with a steady attention, their various manners, ways, and ends ; I applied myself to him for information. At first he put me off with a slight answer, but on my repeating the question with an earnest solicitude, he smoothed his contracted brow, put on a more familiar and inviting air, told me his name was *Knowledge*, and offered to be my guide. I readily accepted him, and he addressed me with these words :

“ You see before you the meadow of *Truth*,
 “ whose lively verdure never decays, being constantly watered by the river of *Wisdom* ; if you follow its course it will lead you to the temple of *Virtue*, through which you shall arrive at that of perfect felicity ;* but though it is a path of peace, and all its ways are pleasantness, how easily is it quitted for the sake of wandering in the wood of *Error* ! enticed by a view of its shady serpentine walks, and vainly imagining they can find a way out whenever they please,

“ they

* Vice often does its own destruction prove,
 But virtue leads to blissful realms above.

“ they boldly enter (fatal delusion !) and involving
“ themselves in its intricate labyrinths, are lost for
“ ever. But let us go nearer, and take a view of
“ its principal avenues.”

As we approached the entrance, my guide bid me take notice of a peasant who was very busy in offering to conduct the travellers through the wood ;
“ See (said he) how readily they yield themselves
“ to the guidance of *Ignorance*, whose appearance
“ has nothing to invite their attention ; for his
“ habit, his air, and his features, speak the clown ;
“ yet such is the indolence of mankind, that they
“ will accept the first conductor who offers his
“ service, rather than be at the pains to obtain a
“ proper one ; but they severely suffer for their
“ negligence, for observe to what dangers he exposes them ; imposed on by his false directions,
“ look what a thorny path that company is walking in, each endeavouring to outstrip his companion, in hopes of obtaining the promised
“ ends of their labours, titles, honours, and splendid distinctions ; for this he has told them, is the
“ path of *Ambition* : but, alas ! what toil attends
“ their steps ! a cruel hag, stiled *Envy*, is perpetually haunting them, they cannot fly from her,
“ and she scarcely ever permits them to rest ; the
“ farther they advance, the thicker the briars shoot

T

“ up,

“ up, and their reward is generally disappointment
 “ and vexation of spirit.

“ A little farther in that narrow alley, you per-
 “ ceive a troop who walk with their eyes fixt upon
 “ the ground, and proceed with the most wary and
 “ cautious steps ; they are in the pursuit of *Riches* ;
 “ their way is full of snares ; *Care* is their con-
 “ stant companion ;* and should they find the
 “ golden mine they are searching after, 'tis in the
 “ midst of so dreary a wilderness, and they have
 “ wandered so far from the meadow of *Truth*
 “ and the river of *Wisdom*, that they will never be
 “ able truly to enjoy it.”

BUT do I not see, said I, addressing my guide,
 one path to which *Ignorance* is leading those youths,
 which resembles the beauty of the meadow ? 'Tis
 covered with turf and enamelled with flowers ; the
 air is perfumed with their mellifluous odours ; a
 chrystal spring murmurs as it flows o'er the glitter-
 ing pebbles ; the ear is enchanted with the pleasing
 harmony of the birds, who warble their melodious
 notes from every bush ; it appears to me the smiling
 path

* A prosp'rous station has its snares,
 And wealth is not without its cares.

path of *Pleasure*, which captivates at first the young and gay, but is attended with temptations as fatal as they are numerous! " 'Tis true, " (reply'd my conductor) that is the path of *Pleasure*; its beginning is smooth, delightful, and " ensnaring, especially to youth; but its end is " certain destruction;* joy and festivity quickly " forsake its followers, and in their room they are " haunted by *Poverty, Disease, Reprach, and* " *Despair*; that even death itself is a welcome relief " from so many distressing ills."

TERRIFIED with this view of the numerous evils that beset every path in that dangerous wood, I exclaimed, Oh! wretched travellers, to what miseries are you exposed! is there no friendly monitor to warn you of the snares into which ignorance and love of pleasure are leading you? " There " is one (replied my conductor) that both admonishes and corrects them; if they would " hear and attend to her instructions, she would " lead them back to the way they have forsaken. " Though her countenance is severe and her manners unpolished, her councils are dictated by " pru-

T 2

* Death treads in pleasure's footsteps round the world.
Night Thoughts.

" prudence, and there is not a more faithful ad-
 " viser than *Adversity* ;* for man, though capable
 " of knowing what is good for him, is too fickle
 " and inconstant to pursue it, too impatient to
 " bear the slow guidance of *Knowledge*, too varia-
 " ble to relish the uniformity of *Truth*, and per-
 " severe in the straight road that leads to *Virtue* ;
 " thus he exchanges *Knowledge* for *Ignorance*, leaves
 " *Truth* for *Error*, and will assuredly reap mi-
 " sery instead of happiness, if the rod of *Adversity*
 " does not chastise the folly that is bound up in
 " his heart."—As we turned from the wood to
 proceed to the temple, I awoke, repeating these
 words, "*Adversity* may often teach us *true* Wis-
 " dom, and lead us to attend to the dictates of
 " Prudence.†

I WILL not make any remarks on the above at
 present, but leave it to your private meditation ;
 and am, with the greatest sincerity, my dear So-
 phronia,

TAUNTON, Sept. 3.

Your's, &c.

* King David says, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*
 Psalms cxix. 67, 71.

† Adversity or affliction, by humbling us before God, may
 lead us (under the sanctifying influences of his Spirit) to true
 penitence for sin, and a willing submission to all his divine
 dispensations.

LETTER XXIV.

From a gentleman to his sister, giving an account of the melancholy death of his wife, through the hard treatment of her relations ; a true story.

TO you I know I may unbosom myself without reserve ; pity me, Oh ! my sister, who, from being on the height of nuptial felicity, am sunk in a few minutes into the depths of human distress.

FORGIVE me keeping you in suspense so long ; but, oh ! with what words shall I relate the melancholly story, or describe the affecting scene *yesterday* morning presented to my view ! However the world may stile it a weakness and pusillanimity in a *man* to shed tears, I cannot help, on the present occasion, unmanning myself so far, and should think it an unfeeling stoicism, derogatory to human nature, if I did not ———

You know I married my dear Cephisa against the consent of her parents, who were averse to the match on account of a former disagreement between them and my relations, about some land

that they held contiguous to their estate in ——— shire. Both of us undoubtedly could not but think it hard, and rather cruel, that a thing in itself a trifle, and so long past, should be made a bar to our marriage, especially when we knew, neither she nor I occasioned, or could prevent it; however, so it was, and Cephisa would not have given me her hand, had not her father and mother, by seeming at *first* to approve of me, induced her to hope they would in a little time be reconciled; for they permitted me to visit her without the least hesitation, till I asked them concerning the fortune they designed to give her, when they seemed quite surprized at the question, and after a long hesitation brought the above objection as a reason why their daughter should not marry me. It was now too late, her affections were fixt, as she then declared, and her happiness as well as mine, wholly depended on our union to each other.

EVER since we came together, it has been our constant study and endeavour to regain their esteem; and we flattered ourselves with the pleasing thought, that when they found we lived in perfect harmony and love, they would receive us into their favour, and grant us a share in their parental affections. The letters we both sent them, entreating their regard in the most respectful and humiliating terms, have

have been always answered with coolness and indifference ; but that which we received last Tuesday night, was penned in such a harsh and angry stile as could not but give each of us great concern in the perusal of it ; one expression especially, that, "*Supposing a single penny could save our lives, they would not give it.*" As it happened my wife was not present when it came, and I (after reading the contents) thought it most prudent not to let her see it ; accordingly, I was just going to burn it, when she entered the room hastily (having heard there was a letter for her in the parlour) and seeing it in my hand, asked me to shew it her ; but I refused, telling her it was too long to read that night, but she should have it in the morning, as soon as she pleased ; (this I said, hoping to have an opportunity of destroying it before then) I put it into my pocket, and nothing more being said about it, imprudently went to bed and forgot it : yesterday morning, being impatient to read it, she took it out privately, while I was asleep (fatal curiosity !) and what followed I hardly know how to reveal——

SHE got up, went into the nursery, and took both her children into her arms, shedding a flood of tears over them, and kissed each of them several times, repeating these words, " GOD bless you
" both,

“ both, my *dear* little innocents ; I hope your dear
 “ father will take care of you for *my* sake.” Then
 turning to the maid, who was quite at a loss to
 know the reason of her strange unaccountable be-
 haviour, desired her to go and tell me, she should
 not come down to breakfast, being taken ill with
 a violent pain in her head.

WHEN the maid returned to the room, she
 found the door locked, and knocking at it several
 times without any answer, came to me in a great
 hurry to inform me of it. I went immediately,
 and, breaking open the door, found her laying on
 the floor, weltering in her blood, flowing from a
 wound in her throat, which, on examination, was
 cut too deep to cure.* The letter above-mentioned
 lay open on the table, with these words written at
 the bottom of it with a pencil: “ My dear and
 “ worthy H ———, farewell ; I loved you, and
 “ am certain was beloved by you ; but my parents
 “ *bate* me : this thought distracts me ; farewell—
 “ forever.”

My little boy was stroaking her face, and cry-
 ing “ Poor mamma,” with tears trickling down
 his

* Suicide is justly stiled an unnatural crime, as self-preser-
 vation is the first law of nature.

his tender cheeks, when I went up to her. I sent for a surgeon, but he told me it was impossible to be of any service. What will her hardened and unnatural parents have to answer for? I cannot proceed, my grief and confusion prevent my adding more at present, than that I am truly your affectionate,

But deeply afflicted Brother.

SOHO-SQUARE,

Nov. 16.

LETTER XXV.

From Camillus to Albanes, with an account of the death of an intimate friend, and a remarkable dream he had relative thereto, inclosed in an elegiac poem on his decease.

SIR,

YOUR desiring a copy of the elegy on my learned and valuable friend, Dr. Scott,* is a sufficient

* The author was intimately acquainted with Dr. Scott, and had the relation of the ensuing dream from himself, which

cient warrant for my troubling you with this, without making an apology for so doing.

I am, Sir,

AYLSHAM,

Your's, &c.

May 14.

CAMILLUS.

which the doctor at the same time informed him, he had noticed down in his bible, and it was accordingly found there after his decease.

Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain,
Night visions may befriend
Our waking dreams are fatal.

Dr. Young.

AN ELEGIAC POEM,

On the DEATH of the late pious and learned

JOSEPH NICOLL SCOTT, M. D.

INSCRIBED TO HIS DISCONSOLATE WIDOW,
BY A SYMPATHIZING FRIEND.*

The Time—Midnight.

NOCTURNAL darknefs hides each pleasing
view,

And covers nature with her solemn pall ;
The hinds no more their rural toils pursue,
But o'er the meads the black'ning shadows fall.
Now mimic fancy takes her nightly reign,
(While airy songsters rest on every spray)
And draws fresh terrors in the sickly brain,
Or paints anew the labours of the day.

'Twas

* Tho' father, mother, husband, wife or child,
Or those whom friendship's tender ties unite,
Sink in the clay cold grave ; be reconcil'd,
Bow to the stroke, and say of all, 'Tis right.

'Twas at this awful hour, when silence keeps
 Her dreary station thro' the midnight air ;
 And wearied industry securely sleeps,
 (While distant fields a sable aspect wear)
 A dreadful vision broke thy wonted rest,
 Oh, SCOTT ! for piety and learning fam'd ;
 A chilling horror seiz'd thy troubled breast,
 While sudden starts some secret woe proclaim'd.
 When by permission, for thy greatest good,
 A form angelic, from the realms on high,
 Ghastly appearance ! in thy chamber stood,
 And said, in dismal accents, "*Thou must die.*"
 Struck with the message, tho' devoid of sense,
 Anxious to know the fatal time, how near ;
 Amaz'd and trembling in a dread suspense,
 Thou ask'd it when ? it answer'd, "*This day*
year."
 Then disappear'd, such was thy dream ; how true,*
 Let weeping Martha say,† she best can tell ;
 Whose faded cheeks continual tears bedew,
 Whose heaving bosom sighs unnumber'd swell.

SAY

* The author would not recommend a *scrupulous* attention to, or an *entire* disregard of dreams, for God speaketh to man in sleep, in slumberings on his bed ; then he openeth his ears and causeth him to receive instruction.

If dreams excite us to think seriously on the most interesting subjects of religion, they are to be accounted blessings, and attended to with gratitude and praise.

† His widow.

SAY Thou, the widowed partner of his heart,
 (To whom his mem'ry will be ever dear,
 Who in his troubles bore a willing part,
 Whose death foretold, was all thou had'st to fear)
 How great thy anguish ! when the foll'wing day,
 He told his dream, in vain from thee conceal'd ;
 And kindly strove to chace thy fears away,
 Or idly wish'd the vision unreveal'd.
 Say, thou disconsolate surviving fair,
 (Who thought his life more precious than thine
 own)

What with thy heart-felt sorrows can compare !
 For oh ! thy much-lov'd dearer self is gone.
 What strange foreboding doubts oppress thy mind,
 While months roll'd on not unobserv'd by thee,
 And every week which still remain'd behind,
 Did but increase thy sad anxiety.
 Till lo ! the time arriv'd, and prov'd too true,
 Which greatly heighten'd every sorrow past ;
 For tho' in seeming health, such pains ensue,
 As verify the dream and prove his last.*

U Methinks

* He was taken with a violent sickness, accompanied with symptoms of a lethargy, on that day year he had this remarkable dream, Wednesday the 20th of December, 1769, and died the Saturday following.

Methinks I see him on the verge of life,

O'erwhelm'd with grief to heav'n for mercy call,

" LORD ! with thy choicest blessings crown my wife,

" My only joy, my comfort, and my all.

" Pardon my sins, O GOD ; I know thou wilt,

" For 'tis thy gracious and benign decree,

" *I will forgive repenting sinners' guilt,*

" *And save the weakest soul who trusts in me.*

" Oh ! make poor Martha's life thy constant care,

" To her thy sweetest consolations give ;

" May she forever in thy goodness share,

" For whose dear sake *alone* I wish to live.

" In deep distress, whenever danger's nigh,

" Be thou the watchful guardian of my love ;

" Protect through life, and when she comes to die,

" Grant we may meet to part no more above."

What inward anguish did his looks betray,

When in the agonies of death he cried,

We now must part ! then just was heard to say,

Pressing thy hand, *farewell, farewell*, and died.

BEWAILING friends, a melancholy train,

Attend his funeral to the distant grave ;

While thou art left in silence to complain,

To joy a stranger, and to grief a slave.

But, gentle mourner, wipe thy streaming eyes,

For know, he's gone to realms of lasting peace ;

While GOD, the widow's refuge, *never* dies,

He reigns above tho' all relations cease.

In pity, Heav'n, behold a widow's grief,
 And on her head unnumber'd mercies pour ;
 In every trouble be her sure relief,
 And endless portion when this life is o'er.

By retrospection, life a *dream* appears,*
 And our past moments but a transient span ;
 Short is the space of even numerous years,
 While frequent fun'erals shew how frail is man.
 Our days by heav'n appointed, are but few,
 Our time's uncertain, tho' our end is sure ;
 Experience proves the observation true,
 In young and old, the affluent and the poor.
 All things around us intimate decay,
 Unknown misfortunes all our steps attend ;
 "Deaths stand like *mercurys* in every way,
 "And kindly point us to our journey's end."†

HIS EPITAPH.

WITHIN this dreary vault in silence lies
 A tender husband and a friend sincere ;
 Whose healing aid remov'd our painful cries,‡
 A loss so great at least deserves a tear.

U 2

Tho'

* This life's a dream, an empty show.

Watts.

† Night Thoughts.

‡ This alludes to his profession as a physician.

Tho' health, oh youth! may now thy steps attend,
 And pleasures court, while time unheeded flies,
 And thou may'st live unmindful of thine end,
 Hear with attention what the grave replies:

"REFLECT, presumpt'ous man! how short thy
 space,

"How few thy moments, and how quick they fly;

"The present time, the fleeting hours embrace,

"For ere another morning *thou* may'st die."

LETTER XXVI.

*From Theron to Altamont, describing his situation;
 with his reflections in one of his evening walks;
 concluding with a quotation from Addison's Cato.*

I AM now sit down with a design to fulfil my
 engagement to my dear friend, in writing to him
 the first opportunity, a description of my present
 situation, which, I doubt not, you will accept with
 pleasure, as a token of that friendship and esteem I
 have ever profest, and would always endeavour to
 evidence I retain for one, so well deserving univer-

fal

ful regard as yourself. But no more on this head, or you will say I flatter; therefore to proceed.

My brother's seat, where I now am, is about half a mile from the high road to Oxford, and two miles on this side that delightful city, surrounded with woods, lawns, groves, and flowery meads;* in the front of it is a fine level green, in the middle of which is a circular basin, with a fountain of curious workmanship. A large and noble pair of gates, with a row of pallisadoes, secure the green from the inroads of heedless travellers; opposite the gates is a long gravel walk, shaded by

U 3

elms,

* The situation of the house reminds me of a similar one of an old friend's deceased, answering the following description:—It was a convenient, pleasant villa, situated in a romantic vale, in the midst of a beautiful country, decorated with woods, lawns, streams, and distant rising hills; such as furnished one of the most perfect landscapes that ever pencil drew, or painter imagined. Behind the rural mansion were gardens laid out in a taste at once elegant and simple; in which Nature appeared dressed to advantage, while Art played only the part of her handmaid; and in the favouring seasons of the year, every thing was calculated to inspire "vernal delight and joy," while even in winter the scene was still agreeable.

Here, and in the surrounding lawns and groves, Sophronius spent many happy hours; and here he often "woo'd Contemplation in her secret haunts," while she listened to the pleasing melody of the twittering birds, or sat attentive to the gentle murmurs of the purling stream.

alms, growing in rows on each side, and terminated by a wide and extensive common, over which you have a beautiful prospect of the distant country, almost unbounded. On the left side of the walk, appears one of a serpentine form, shaded in the same manner, which leads to the church, and is reckoned above a mile in length; with verdant fields on one hand, and the common on the other; but separated from it by an elegant fence of Chinese railing. Here I often repair of an evening, with Thomson's Seasons, or some other entertaining author; and while I read, am sweetly serenaded by the feather'd warblers of the groves from the o'er-shadowing branches.

On the right side of the walk is a grove, through which runs a transparent murmuring stream, and leads to a hermit's cave at the further end of it; where a skull and an hour-glass, on an old-fashioned table, intimate how well the place is suited for the most solemn meditations.

BEHIND the house, are the gardens, which are laid out in a rural and grotesque manner: in one part is a large and elegant summer-house, through which a door opens into a beautiful grotto; here a cold bath is made, surrounded with blue and white marble. At the extremity of the garden is a long
and

and spacious canal, with a fine pleasure boat, where, in calm and pleasant weather, we drink tea of an afternoon; the flower-enamelled meadows, with the herds and flocks on the borders of the stream, render the scene truly pleasant and agreeable.

WALKING one evening by the side of this noble piece of water, my thoughts were employed on the beauties of the creation, displayed in every part of the variegated landscape presented to my view. How, said I, can man sufficiently admire and adore the wisdom that planned the amazing scheme, and the hand that formed the heavens and the earth! Let the Atheist, who denies the being of his all-wise Creator, look to the flowers in yonder mead, the grass in yonder field, and the birds on every bough, twittering their evening songs to the Supreme Author of universal nature, and with the deepest prostration confess his folly, and own a GOD; let him joyfully adopt that fine soliloquy in Cato,

. If there's a Power above me?
(And that there is, all Nature speaks aloud
'Thro' all her works) he must delight in *virtue*,
And that which *he* delights in must be *happy*.

I will not detain you longer on a subject which
has

has so often employed much abler pens than mine, but leave it to infinite Wisdom to make himself known (in his own time, which must be the *best*) to all whom he shall think fit ; in the mean time, may it be your and my happiness, to be led by every temporal spring, to the great eternal fountain of all, is the earnest desire of,

Dear Friend,

Your's, &c.

GODSTOW, *Oxfordshire*,

July 10.

THERON.

LETTER XXVII.

A picture of rural felicity, or solitude suitably improved ; in a letter from a gentleman retired from business, to his friend in town ; an extract.

DEAR FRIEND,

BEFORE I withdrew from the busy world, I had my apprehensions, I confess, lest an excess of solitude, after much bustle, might drive me back again to care and commerce ; but I found my deficiencies

iciencies of moral wisdom too great, not to risque some present conveniences to retrieve it. I thought with that sweet poet Mr. Thomson, I could not go where universal love reigned not around; and besides I had a notion of a *constitutional* as well as a *moral* rational happiness, and resolved to trust something to it.

THE little land I came possessed of, by the death of my cousin, had been long neglected, and I found the dispositions of the poor neighbouring rustics in a very little better situation. I determined to cultivate both to the utmost of my power, by the sweat of my brow, and the maxims of my mind. An early attention to botany gives me a smattering knowledge of the virtues of simples, and this study I daily employ in the service of humanity; nor is *divinity*, my delightful meditation, forgot to be applied where it is wanted.

THE old shepherd reclines his grey head upon his crook, and blesses me for the truths that I teach him; and when the oxen are released from the team, even the rustic ploughboy seeks for my instruction. When little differences arise, I arbitrate between the parties, and in every difficulty or doubt, am applied to as a counsellor and a friend. The poor man divides my little loaf with me, and
the

the fainting traveller rests him at my porch, and rejoices over the fruit of my vintage.

My little income is sufficient for the utmost wishes of my heart, and enables me to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the necessities of patient merit, and make the whole hamlet smile around me. My son chearfully assists in these duties; he carries the medicines to the sick, and divides the burthen with the weary. The small knowledge of books I allow him, gives him a consequence for his learning, and he employs the little influence he thus acquires, with great judgment and discretion, I tell him a fur gown or gold chain can never exalt a man intrinsically, nor the lowest offices of humanity degrade him. "When you see the aged, my son, stooping under their burden of dry sticks, see that you lay the faggot at their door; and if the proud man condemns your education, pity and pass him by."

My dear and affectionate daughter supplies to me in a great measure, the loss I have sustained in her dear mother; she amply rewards my tender care of her infancy, by a diligence of duty I cannot describe to you. The conduct of my little family is hers; her œconomy at home enables her to be liberal abroad; and she loves all my lessons and

piously

piously pursues them. When the business of the field or the necessities of our neighbours, keep my son and I longer absent than usual, the sweet smile of affectionate complacency welcomes our return ; the decent table is prepared, the chearful blaze provided, and the harmony of the evening begins.

IN one corner of my garden is a lonely, peaceful hermitage, made up of roots, and decorated with some striking mementos of mortality ; here in my thoughtful moments I retire, to meditate on the sublime truths of religion, converse with the preaching dead, and say to the worm, *Thou art my sister* ; here I think of the conquerors who have dropt their truncheons in the cold and silent grave, of celebrated wits who are known no more upon the earth, and beauties who have resigned their graces to the tomb. They teach me what I am, and what I soon must be ; and I thank death for preaching so profoundly.*

You will never more, I am persuaded, invite me to London. Here my affections are engaged, here my reason is satisfied,† and here I shall lay my ashes.

* Wait the great teacher *Death*. *Pope.*

† Here on a single plank thrown safe ashore,
I hear the tumult of the distant throng,
As that of seas remote or dying storms. *Dr. Young.*

ashes. A plain and peaceful stone shall one day cover my remains, and no pride of epitaph shall draw the traveller to gaze at it. The villagers perhaps for some few years may tell how much I loved them; but all things, sooner or later, are forgotten. I am,

MATLOCK,
Derbyshire, July 13.

Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

From Rusticus to Clitander, describing a summer-house belonging to his friend Philenus, with reflections on a morning's walk; concluding with an account of the melancholy end of Miss L. a young lady of beauty and merit.

DEAR CLITANDER,

I AM now retired into the study of my valuable friend Philenus, to answer your obliging letter. My present situation is quite agreeable to my solitary disposition, and invites me to serious reflection.

At

AT the bottom of a long gravel walk, shaded on each side with lofty elms, my friend has built a summer-house, the upper part of which is his study; opposite to the door, on a sort of shelf, is placed an hour-glass, and by the side of it a mirror, with a death's head on the top of it; underneath is written, in large characters, *Vide et nosce teipsum, tempus fugit*;* intimating the shortness of time, and vanity of man in his best estate; or that the knowledge of ourselves is the greatest wisdom. From the windows, verdant fields, glittering streams, luxuriant meadows, and hanging woods, present the eye with a truly rural landscape, bounded only by the horizon.

ON the left, at a little distance, the church is seen, which appears an old gothic building, adorned with a lofty spire, the work of hands ages ago mouldered into dust. On the right, a few lowly cottages, the dwellings of labouring swains, scattered here and there, with flocks and herds feeding in the adjoining meads, add to the simplicity of the sylvan scene. Near the above emblematical device, in an elegant book-case, is a well-chosen

X

collection

* See and know thyself; time flies away.

collection of authors, chiefly on religious subjects, by the side of it, a writing-desk; and round the room several instructive and entertaining pictures, leading the spectator to the most interesting events in history, or representing the beauties of the distant country; here, secluded from the noise and hurry of the busy town, nothing appears to divert my attention or engage my thoughts, but what at the same time tends to calm and compose my mind, and fix it on objects heavenly and divine. At present, as the poet describes it,

The sun, with fervid beams,
O'er meadows, hills, and streams,
Shines thro' the noon-tide hours;
As beauteous charms decay
(Of sore distress the prey)
So fade the drooping flowers;
While flocks and herds,
With warbling birds,
To some thick shades repair,
A cool retreat,
From sultry heat,
Which now invades the air.

WELCOME solitude, which leaves me to enjoy my own reflections without disturbance; and affords me an opportunity, while Philenus is unavoidably

voidably engaged abroad, to correspond with my dear Clitander.

I took a walk this morning in the neighbouring fields, before the dews were exhaled by the increasing heat ; a walk by the side of flowery hedges, whose blossoms, while they pleased my eye with their variegated colours, regaled my senses with the most delicious fragrance. The morning was pleasant, the air serene, and the heavens unclouded. As I passed along, I could not help reflecting on the ingratitude too many are guilty of, to their beneficent Creator for the mercies they enjoy, as numerous as they are unmerited.

HEALTH, the greatest of earthly blessings ; wealth, that useful attendant upon man, though (it may be) granted in a rich abundance, how little are they gratefully acknowledged by the world in general, or individuals in particular. It is commonly observed, a thing not worth asking for, is not worth having ; it may as well be said, a blessing not deserving our thankfulness and acknowledgment, is not worth our enjoying ; but where is there such an one ? Indeed, where is there the least of the Almighty's gifts to his creatures, which does not merit their highest gratitude, and call for their daily praise ? Surely 'tis our duty to own our

X 2

obligations

obligations to heaven even for our *existence*, much more for those favours which make it comfortable and happy.

I AM sorry to find your son turns out so indifferent ; I am well persuaded 'tis not for want of the best example and instructions,* but through a proneness in youth to follow pleasures and amusements, suited to their gay and thoughtless inclinations ; yet, give not up your hope concerning him ; he may be reclaimed in time, be led to see his folly and undutifulness, and, convinced of his error, repent and reform before it is too late ; an overruling Providence may graciously interpose, and bring him to a sight and sense of his evil doings, and make him a comfort to you, and a growing blessing to all around ; I sincerely wish he may.

No one is without his troubles of one kind or another ; I received yesterday, the following melancholy account of that late amiable young lady, Miss L——, which, I dare say, you have not been informed of, as it was kept as secret as possible by
her

* 'Tis the duty of parents to give their children good instructions, and set before them good examples ; but God alone can render them successful.

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Mr. —

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* If e
whenever
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often fin

her relations, and only communicated to me by Mr. ———, who is very intimate in the family.

LAST winter Miss L—— was upon a visit to Mrs. Alfred, her aunt in town; and going to the different public places of diversion, was greatly admired for her beauty (to be sure she was a fine figure) Among the rest who fixed their eyes on her, was a Mr. R——, a gay, genteel young fellow, who, being acquainted with her aunt, easily got introduced into her company, and often made one of the party to attend her and Mrs. Alfred to the several amusements in vogue. In a few weeks, Miss L—— appeared prejudiced in his favour, and never seemed so chearful and happy as when he was present. Mr. R. observed her attachment to him with much pleasure, and continued more and more every day endeavouring to ingratiate himself into her esteem; he soon succeeded to the best of his wishes, and made an open confession of his passion to her: she received it with apparent satisfaction, but referred him to her aunt for permission to visit her as a lover.* Mrs. Alfred,

X 3

upon

* If every young lady would act in this prudent manner, whenever they are *first* addressed by young fellows, they would not have so many difficulties to struggle with as they often find in similar cases.

upon his mentioning it, told him she could not say any thing to it till she had wrote to Mr. L——, the young lady's father, which she promised to do the first opportunity ; in the mean time, she took care they should never be alone together.

THE very day she sent the letter, she received one from Mr. L——, desiring his daughter might return immediately, as her eldest sister was extremely ill, and given over by the physicians.— Miss L—— received the news with great trouble, not only on account of her sister's illness, but being obliged to leave London, and forced from the man who had gained her heart. Their parting was a scene too pathetic to describe : after telling him her direction, and shedding a flood of tears, she set off for her father's seat in Devonshire. Her arrival there, and meeting her sorrowful relations just as her sister died, was truly affecting ; in short, it threw her into a melancholy. Her friends observed it, and endeavoured all they could to divert her ; but something seemed to hang heavy on her spirits, too heavy to be removed, which she would not discover.

ONE morning they went to call her to breakfast, and found she was gone out, nobody knew where, unless it was in the garden ; diligent search

was

was made for her to no purpose 'till the next day, when she was taken up drowned in a canal near Mr. R——'s house. In looking over her papers, a letter was found in her bureau from an acquaintance in town, informing her Mr. R—— was killed in a duel: and the last words he said, were, " Oh dear, but absent Maria, could I have " seen you once more, I should have died in peace. " Farewell—*forever*." At the bottom of the letter she had written the following lines:

TOO lovely youth, by all around approv'd,
By all lamented, as by all belov'd;
Why didst thou rashly thus thy life expose,
And load Maria with unnumber'd woes?
Fain would Religion lend her aid divine,
While anxious friends their feeble efforts join,
To raise my spirits and divert my grief,
But all in vain; there's none can give relief.

Heav'n only knows what sorrows tore my heart,
In that sad hour when we were forc'd to part;
But, oh! what tongue could half my anguish tell,
When in th' above I read thy last farewell?
'Twas for *thy* sake I wish'd to live, alone;
Now thou art dead, my life's a burthen grown:
Dear youth farewell, earth has no joys for me,
I cannot live without, I'll therefore die with thee.

HER

HER family is truly a scene of confusion and distress, and really much to be pitied. These rash resolutions and violent effects of a juvenile passion, I cannot but say, appear to me, not only the greatest weakness ; but a flying in the face of Heaven, and may justly expect to be rewarded with eternal vengeance.*

PASSIONS are to be regulated by reason, and controuled by the dictates of religion, or for what could our reasoning powers and faculties be given us ? I know there are very few who wish to persuade themselves, their appetites were given them for any other purpose than to be satisfied, even at the expence of their health, fortune, and reputation ; but Providence has appointed lawful methods and institutions for the sober and prudent gratification of them, as wise as they are beneficial both to individuals and the community ; which it is the duty as well as highest interest of all mankind to pursue.

I FEAR you will think this a tedious epistle,
therefore

* As we cannot *lengthen* our lives, we should not attempt to *shorten* them, for as death leaves us judgment will find us.

therefore I'll beg your indulgence no longer than while I subscribe myself,

Your's, &c.

CORNWALL, Sept. 5.

RUSTICUS.

LETTER XXIX.

From Eusebius to Alcoret, demonstrating the advantages and superiority of a religious life, even supposing there were no future state; with a quotation from Ray on the Creation, and Young's Night Thoughts, in defence of his arguments.

I WAS much surprized, on the reading of my dear friend's letter, to find he intimates a doubt concerning the reality of a future state; and seems to think with indifference on the importance of religion, especially respecting the grand doctrine of a life of happiness or misery beyond the grave. Whatever arguments you may have been furnished with by the gay, thoughtless, and dissipated votaries of pleasure in favour of *annihilation*, be assured they

they will not bear a close examination without proving vain, trifling, and a lie.*

“ ‘Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,

“ And intimates eternity to man.”

Cato.

“ Art thou such a clod to wish thyself all clay ?

“ Nature’s first wish is endless happiness ;

“ Annihilation is an after-thought,

“ A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.”

Dr. Young.

THE present life is very properly called a state of trial, and well compared to a *journey*, *race*, *warfare*, and *shadow*, that soon passeth away, when contrasted with, and considered as a passage to, or the time of preparing for, a future and eternal one ; without which consideration, the above similes which the scriptures hold forth, would appear and must be deemed trifling and absurd.

BUT another strong argument for the certainty
of

* Who tells me, he denies his soul immortal,
Whate’er his boast, has told me, *he’s a knave*;
Who thinks ere long the man shall *wholly* die,
Is dead already ; nought but *brute* survives.

Dr. Young.

of a future state, may be drawn from the apparent unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in the *present* world, as well as the continual thirst in man for some *future* good; above all, the declarations of sacred writ, which, speaking of the righteous and wicked, say, *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*;* and many more similar ones too numerous to mention in a letter, but well worthy your searching after and regard, all join to corroborate the reality of a world *to come*.†

VERY few, if any, *really* disbelieve a future state, but many *wish* there were none, or endeavour to persuade themselves of it; because, supposing there is no such thing, they shall not be called to an account for their actions, which account they may have the greatest reason to dread the thoughts of.‡ But you seem to imagine, if there is no hereafter, you may live as you list, as the common observation

tion

* Mathew xxv. 41. See also 2 Cor. v. 1, iv. 10. Luke xviii 30. Daniel xii. 2.

† See Mental Pleasures, vol. II. page 93.

‡ As was the pillar of fire and a cloud to the Israelites and Egyptians, being light to the one and darkness to the other, so is the doctrine of a future state to the righteous and the wicked.

Turner.

tion is, and adopt the language of those who said,
" Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ;" a
 very erroneous and blame-worthy method of think-
 ing and acting this, which corrupt nature only can
 suggest and encourage.

No, my dear friend, be assured from the writings
 and experience of all ages, that Virtue is its own
 reward, and Vice its own punishment in the *present*
 life ; this we have daily proofs of, especially the
latter, from the frequent untimely and ignominious
 ends of the profligate and abandoned. May such
 repeated warnings and examples of the truth of di-
 vine revelation, *The end of these things is death*,
 make a suitable impression on the minds of all,
 and excite us to *be spiritually minded, which is life*
and peace.

SHOULD we, for argument's sake, admit a pro-
 bability of annihilation, yet a life of piety and
 virtue will be found the safest and the best, even in
this case ; not only as the means of prolonging our
 existence,* but to procure the enjoyment of peace
 of mind, cheerfulness of temper, and in a great
 measure, health and content. In this view, a vir-
 tuous

* The scriptures assert, *Wicked men live not half their days.*
 Ps. lv. 23.

trous life is not only our duty, but best *policy* to pursue, as the way to the greatest happiness and tranquillity that can be enjoyed on earth. Dr. Young very justly says,

Religion's all.

For it ensures us felicity here below, and if there is an eternity (which both reason and revelation join to enforce) everlasting joy ; there is all in it we can want to make us happy for *both* worlds, on that account 'tis all we should follow and chiefly prize.

THE late bishop of Chester, in a discourse on natural religion, speaking of the advantages arising from the belief of a Supreme Being, and living up to such a belief, observes, " He that believes and
" owns a GOD, if there should be none, is in no
" danger of any bad consequence ; for all the inconvenience of this will be, that he may be
" hereby occasioned to tie himself up to some
" needless restraints during this short time of his
" life ; wherein notwithstanding there is, as to the
" *present*, much peace, quiet, and safety ; and as
" to the *future*, his error shall die with him, there
" being none to call him to an account for his
" mistake." And Mr. Ray, in his Treatise on

Y

the

the Wisdom of GOD in the Creation, quoting the above passage, very properly adds, " He not only
 " suffers no damage from the belief of an here-
 " after, but reaps a considerable benefit from his
 " mistake, if there is none ; for during this life,
 " he enjoys a pleasant dream or fancy of a future
 " blessed state, with the thoughts and expectations
 " whereof he solaces himself, and agreeably en-
 " tertains his time ; and is in no danger of being
 " ever awakened out of it, or convinced of his
 " error and folly, death making a full end of
 " him."*

Excuse my troubling you with these quotations ; but, as I am well assured I cannot advance any thing more to the purpose, and as you may not have met with or observed them, permit me to recommend them to your private meditations, as remarks, suited in the strongest manner to corroborate and support the arguments I have mentioned in the former part of this letter ; and to convince you
 there

* Supposing the reality of a future state (says the pious Mrs. Rowe) to be but a mere fiction, yet the good man has this advantage attending his belief of it, that death which alone can rob him of his hope concerning future happiness, puts him forever out of a capacity of lamenting his loss.

there have been and still are persons, famed for piety, virtue, and the knowledge of men and things, of the same opinion with myself.

UPON the whole, you may take it for an undeniable fact; and it is my earnest desire you may ever experience, Religion is the best profession, the Knowledge of God and yourself the truest wisdom, and Temperance the best physic; or a life of piety and virtue, is the spring of unspeakable comfort and happiness on earth, and a prelude to an inheritance of eternal glory in heaven.

FORGIVE the length of this, and believe me to be with the greatest sincerity,

Dear friend,

Your real well-wisher for *both* worlds,

MANCHESTER,

EUSEBIUS.

June 5.

LETTER XXX.

Tryeson's description of his friend Thymander's romantic retreat ; with an adventure of a singular kind, respecting a female recluse, or the fair Sobrina ; an extract.

DEAR SIR,

THE following adventure, I persuade myself, will afford you no small pleasure, as it in some measure elucidates the history of the pious Sobrina, the young lady you was so desirous of being acquainted with. Not far from my friend Thymander's country house, where I am at present on a visit ; are the remains of an ancient castle, part of which he has converted into a beautiful seat, leaving the other part in its tottering state, an emblem of the sure decay of all earthly grandeur.

THIS venerable ruin stands retired from the rest of the place, which every where carries the most cheerful appearance that can be imagined.

BEHIND, a wood of an almost impenetrable darkness, through which you pass to a country, an
entire

entire contrast to that you have left, rocky and uncultivated; a slight path-way prompts curiosity to go on, though all idea of pleasure is left behind. Accustomed, however, soon to these romantic scenes, the mind begins to relish them, and a fine old wood, to which you are drawing near, seems to promise a conclusion of this wild scene; you are scarcely entered into it, when your eyes are struck with this antiquated building, the most beautiful I ever saw, standing on the finest turf, and surrounded by trees still more venerable, which the rough hand of time has also shaken.

THE part which my friend has fitted up, is suitable to the rest of the castle, and only seems as if one of the apartments was left entire. Here he leaves a small collection of books, with pen, ink, and paper, as concluding the mind will naturally incline, in this place of retirement, to *study* and *contemplation*; and may also be induced to commit to paper, some of those interesting ideas which an uninterrupted solitude usually suggests.

ABOUT this time last year, I went down to this gentleman's house, to spend the Easter holidays; and used to delight in taking a walk daily and spending some hours in this agreeable recess; which seemed peculiarly calculated for the indulgence of-

those solemn thoughts that at that season may naturally be supposed to engross the whole man.

FULL of these thoughts, I wandered as usual through the wood to the building, intending to indulge myself for an hour or two, in the contemplation of our REDEMPTION.—I was surprized at my entrance, to see a young lady, deeply engaged in thought, sitting by the table. I was going to retire, when finding she had not perceived me, I ventured to stay.

THE most pleasing serenity, joined with the most intense meditation, were visible in her countenance. After some time, she took up the pen and wrote: I was in a most distressed situation; I feared to retire, lest I should disturb her;—though I wished not to interrupt so useful a study as her's seemed to be, I at last attempted to steal away; but on my moving, she heard me, and retired with precipitation at the opposite door; in her haste, she let fall a paper, which an irresistible desire of knowing the subject of her thoughts, prompted me to take up, and I read with unspeakable pleasure, the following meditation:

“ O my soul! let us retire a little from the world; let me enter into my closet, and shut the
doors

doors about us ; let us consider what we are and what we must be ; I know that I am, and I feel I am IMMORTAL.—I know too, for God has told me so, that I am to have every bodily infirmity one day removed, and *This mortal put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption.* I believe that I have a CREATOR, a REDEEMER, and a SANCTIFIER ; I am not now to consider whether I believe these things, for my heart yields an entire assent to every one of them ; but my faith may want strengthening, and my practice, quickening ; it is therefore necessary, and it is also delightful, to spend some little time in attending to truths, which I believe, and in examining how my life corresponds with my faith. Do I believe there is a GOD ? Yes ; that he is all *mighty*, all *wisdom*, all *justice*, all *knowledge* ?* Yes ; do I therefore think of him, pray to him, love, serve, and worship him ? O my soul ! these things would raise me above the world, while I am in it, and make my life easy, tranquil and happy.

Do I believe that I am redeemed ? Do I believe that

* The firm belief and constant remembrance of the omniscience and omnipresence of Jehovah, will ever prove an antidote to sin, and an excitement to holiness of life. Genesis xxxix 9.

that my REDEEMER liveth? and that he shall stand at the last day upon the earth, and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see GOD? Yes; I do believe and tremble; but why tremble? why not rather rejoice and be exceedingly glad, that great is your reward in heaven; and may I, even I, hope for this reward? I may hope; but it is an unlawful thought, that this depends upon *myself*. If *sincerity, uprightness, benevolence, piety and virtue* attend all my actions, then I shall be blest indeed; let me resolve to practise them, and with chearfulness perform those duties that will tend to insure me the great happiness which is offered me; that GOD in Christ may not only be my portion hereafter, but smooth the bed of death, calm the awful hour that separates me from the present state, and make my continuance on earth as comfortable and chearful, as the variety of this uncertain and chequered world is capable of.

I MUST *die*! and what is death? it is only the breaking down the thin partition that separates this part of my existence from that to come; in a short time I shall know by *experience* what it is; I shall stand on the brink of the grave. I am now as happy as this world can make me; friends, fortune, and health, all conspire to afford me pleasure, felicity.

felicity and joy. Still, still however these comforts, even if they last my life, must at death be parted from me, or rather I from them; shall I not then endeavour to secure *future*, as well as enjoy *present* happiness? How dreadful would it be, for death to be the *end* of all my joys, and the *beginning* of all my sorrows!* in that last and solemn hour, to have to look back on a life spent in God's service, and forward to a crown of eternal glory, is comfort indeed! is *more* than comfort! it is joy inconceivable! the sure and certain hopes of the righteous soul, overpay all the pains and afflictions of the body,† which sinks into the grave, with humble expectation of again uniting with the soul, and together enjoying, what?—an *eternity* of bliss; Oh! how would that word weigh on my mind, if I would give it leave to dwell there awhile. Oh! my soul! shall we indeed never, *never* part when we meet again? Are we afraid of pain and misery for a short duration here, and shall we not strive, with the assistance of divine grace,‡ to avoid it hereafter? especially as the alternative is an inheritance

* To an ungenerate or carnal man, *dying* such, the sufferings of life, and the pangs of death, are but the *beginnings* of sorrow.

† Romans viii. 18.

‡ Philippians ii. 12, 13.

heritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens.*

THINK, O my soul! and admire the stupendous love and condescension of the great God, Man, Mediator; He that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and holds it in the hollow of his hand, *even He has died to save us.* Let us then with joyful gratitude, enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; and let those powers which he has given me, be employed to the gracious purpose he so mercifully bestows them for, even to secure my own eternal happiness; and let me ever remember, that as sure as I now live, so sure I must ere long *die*; and as I die, so sure I must be judged at the latter day.† Oh! my soul,
let

* 1 Peter i. 4.

† God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world by his son Christ Jesus, by whom he made the world. On that awful and tremendous day, usher'd in by a voice louder than that which shook mount Sinai on the promulgation of the law; death and hell shall deliver up the dead that are therein; and the scattered remains of millions of rational creatures shall be collected together, and the immortal spirit again possess the habitation it had so long forsaken.

To the astonish'd sight of this innumerable multitude, the Son of God shall appear in the clouds of heaven, in great glory,

let us as it were, place ourselves before the judgment seat of Christ; * behold my Redeemer appears to examine the *actions* of my life, the *words* of my mouth, and the *thoughts* of my heart; what!—

HERE I disturbed her studies, and broke off what she would have added, to compleat the awful scene she was about to describe. I had an opportunity soon after, of learning that she was the sister of a gentleman, who a few months ago died in the neighbourhood; to whom my friend had given the liberty of spending what time she pleased in this solitary place; as soon as I found out who the above paper belonged to, I sent it her, begging the favour to copy it, which she had the good nature to comply with, as she said, "it was now too late to try to conceal it from me."

THOUGH the foregoing particulars may exceed the

glory, with all his holy angels. Before his dread tribunal every son and daughter of Adam shall be convened; an exact scrutiny shall be taken of their lives and actions; impartial judgment shall be pronounc'd on all; and amidst the solemnities of a burning world, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.

Stennett's Sermons.

* 2 Corinthians v. 10.

the bounds of a letter, I doubt not they will be truly acceptable, without apologizing for the length of them ; as they hold out the genuine sentiments and devout ejaculations of a *real Christian*.

LIDFORD,
Somersetshire, April 24.

I am, dear Sir,
Your's, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

RETIREMENT, FRIENDSHIP, AND BOOKS.

A letter to a young gentleman, describing the way to improve a country life ; the blessings of real friendship ; and recommending what books to read for instruction and entertainment.*

RETIREMENT.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE manner in which some persons spend their time in the country, wholly devoted to the pursuit of

* Mr. Thomson in his excellent poem on the Seasons, has elegantly set forth the pleasures and happiness of a country life, with

of field sports, or the pleasures of the bottle, is not to be imitated but condemned; for we were created by an all-wise Supreme, for higher and nobler ends, than to gratify our appetites and passions, in following a continual round of amusements and dissipation, or to pass away our lives in a dull and slothful inactivity.*

Th' omniscient Lord of heav'n and earth,
Whose nod alone was nature's birth,

Endued his creature, *Man*, with reasoning powers
and faculties, that he might glorify his Maker,
adorn his station, and do all possible good to his
fellow-creatures.† We have duties to practise and

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employ-

with the requisites for the enjoyment of it, in the following lines :

An elegant sufficiency, content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue, and approving heaven.

* I am no favourer of monastic solitude, nor constrained devotion. "Religion does not send her votaries to cloisters, to add one crime to another, by retreat into a useless, and too often a discontented life; where uniform and chearful piety cannot shew its light to the world, nor encourage others to tread the same footsteps by example."

Deverell's Miscellanies.

† Thus God and Nature link'd the general frame,
And bade self-love and social be the same.

Pope.

employments to pursue, under the several characters of probationers for eternity, the loyal subjects of the best of sovereigns, members of the community, parents, children, friends, &c. which disregarding, we forfeit the name of Christians, and expose ourselves to the just vengeance of a righteous God.

I do not recommend *hunting, shooting*, and the like rural diversions, (a) as they appear to me extremely hazardous, and in some measure cruel. What exercise then, you may reply, would you advise me to take? *Riding, walking, bowling*, and every other innocent recreation, that while they promote health of body and cheerfulness of mind, offend not religion, virtue, or morality; or denominate you presumptuous or hard-hearted.

ABOVE all, take care to keep your thoughts employed on serious and *instructive* subjects, lest they prove the occasion of the worst of actions.* Of all idleness, that of the *mind* is the most to be avoided. Reading treatises on Divinity, History, Ethics,

(a) Read Thomson's *Autumn*, especially from line 360.

* In order to keep out evil thoughts, cherish only good ones. *Walking Amusements.*

Ethics, and the study and practice of the polite Arts ; with frequent reflections on the works of Creation, Providence, and Grace ; joined to the company and conversation of a few select friends, together with relieving, as far as in your power, the necessitous and indigent ; will make retirement at all times and in all weathers, welcome, laudable, and improving : without a taste for the above exercises and employments, solitude must be only a stupid, unenviable, and inglorious life.*

FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN poverty, through unforeseen, and it may be unavoidable disappointments, losses, and misfortunes, in the course of business, reduces the once affluent, successful, and industrious merchant, into a state of trouble, vexation, and distress, how welcome must the company of a benevolent man,

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touched

* Persons who have a turn for husbandry and gardening, may always find amusement and recreation in the recesses of the country, in all seasons of the year, healthful, innocent, and commendable.

Happy the man, whom bounteous Gods allow,
With his own hands paternal grounds to plow ;
Oh ! happy, if he knew his happy state,
The swain who free from bus'ness and debate,
Receives his easy food from Nature's hand,
And just returns of cultivated land.

Dryden's Virgil.

touched with a sense of his fellow-creature's melancholy situation, be to one in such circumstances; but how much more pleasing and acceptable must be the gift, when bestowed by a sympathizing heart into the lap of famine, sickness, and despair; the former is the picture of a real *friend*, the latter the generous effusion of a sincere and disinterested *friendship*.

As happiness and misery are the constant attendants on mortality, the enjoyment of the one is heightened, and the sufferings of the other alleviated by the aid and endearments of a real friend. Though Providence has bestowed on you riches in abundance,* you would still be unhappy if destitute of a *friend*; should he be pleased to visit you with affliction, you may still be happy in the sympathy of friendship; then bless the Almighty for giving you the one, and endeavour to merit the continuance of the other. Let universal benevolence animate your breast, and a noble philanthropy influence your actions; may piety to GOD inspire you with devotion, and charity to men excite you to liberality.

FRIENDSHIP

* The above letter was written to a young gentleman on his being called into the country, to take possession of a large estate, left him by a near relation.

FRIENDSHIP is that actuating principle of the mind, which stimulates a person to kind and obliging offices, independent of age, sex, and condition of life. Should the chill hand of penury damp your enjoyment of the good things of the present state, should the pains incident to mortality attack your tenement of clay, and threaten its speedy dissolution; friendship can administer comfort in the one case, and yield the assuaging balm of consolation in the other. Dr. Young, speaking of the benefits of friendship, says,

“ Lorenzo, hast thou no friend to set thy mind
abroach ?

“ Good sense will stagnate, thoughts shut up
want air,

“ And spoil, likes bales, unopen'd to the sun.”

Night Thoughts.

A just remark, worthy the remembrance and regard of all. The distress of that man, who, on the brink of indigence and ruin, is destitute of a friend to commiserate and assist him, can be described no otherwise than by styling it inexpressibly great and inconceivably affecting: to give an adequate idea of it, I must compare the poor wretched and friendless creature to an affrighted mariner in a storm; surrounded with dangers on every side, his vessel shattered by the conflicting elements,

without sails, masts, or rudder, and every brother sailor drowned but himself ; the picture is deeply shaded, and yet not exaggerated in the least.*

WHILE the ambitious are courting honours, the covetous riches, and the young pleasures ; may it be your and my happiness to have *real* friends, whose constant aim may be to prove themselves worthy of our unreserved confidence and unalterable esteem ; whose lives and conversation may be consonant to the precepts of religion, and shew them to the world as *Men* and *Christians* ; with such, every earthly blessing will be enhanced, every sorrow lessened, and every grief allayed ; with such, poverty will be supportable, and calamities, though ever so deplorable, able to be borne ; without such desirable treasures, the most elevated station would be but exalted misery, and the greatest fortune the inheritance of discontent.

GRANT, O Thou Divine Philanthropist ! a long continuance of these inestimable blessings to my friend ; and teach him to pity even kings, who
are

* The world in purchase of a friend is gain.

are daily surrounded with none but *flattering* attendants, and address with nothing but the unmeaning compliments of fawning adulation.

FRIENDSHIP, the medicine of life, and a friend, the physician who administers it, under the influences of Religion, calm the fever of anger, cure the ague of fear, remove the low spirits of despondency, dissipate the vapours of doubt, give ease in the ragings of trouble, and felicitate the regions of mortality ; this invaluable restorative is preserved in an *honest* heart, and readily operates by producing an unchangeable affection, sympathy, and benevolence.

BOOKS.

IN the former part of this letter, I recommended for part of your amusement and employ in your solitude and retirement, from the cares of business and the noise of the capital, *reading*,* as a rational, improving, and agreeable entertainment. Permit me to remind you on this head, not to run over, in a careless or indifferent manner, any author's production, lest you lose the benefit of instruction ;
weigh

* *Reading and reflection* are the basis of true wisdom.

See Thoughts in younger Life.

weigh and consider well what you read; and in order to fix on your mind particular passages, new, and worthy your remark, keep pen, ink and paper by you, to write them down for your frequent perusal and remembrance.

TAKE particular care what books you chuse respecting *Divinity*; I would advise you to peruse few, if any, treatises on *controversial* points;* study well the *Scriptures*, and implore wisdom from on high to lead you into the true sense and meaning of them, for your eternal profit and advantage; be chiefly solicitous to be well grounded and established in the most essential doctrines of faith and practice in religion; without puzzling yourself with respect to particular modes and ceremonies of worship, which, strictly adhered to, will only declare you more nice than wise. *Try all things, but hold fast that which is good.*

FORGIVE my freedom in offering you advice on this subject, as it is deviating from the enquiry
what

* The young gentleman to whom the above was written, had requested in a letter to the author, his advice concerning the best way to improve a country life, his thoughts on Friendship, and what books were most worthy his purchase and perusal.

what books are most worthy your regard, and best adapted to elucidate the paths to knowledge, virtue, piety, and happiness.

Description of a small but useful Library, fit for either town or country.*

I WOULD admonish you, for your better understanding the *sacred* writings, to consult Henry's or Dr. Gill's Exposition of the Old and New Testament; Poole's Annotations, and Doddridge's Family Expositor. To inform your judgement concerning the gospel method of salvation, and the benefits of a religious life, read that justly admired, though plain narrative, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, together with Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul; Venn's Whole Duty of Man; Hervey's Meditations, and Theron and Aspasio; Bennet's Christian Oratory; Mrs. Rowe's Works; Henry on the Sacrament; Dr. Watts's Works; Young's Night Thoughts; Flavell's Works; Taylor's Holy Living and Dying; Sherlock on Death, Providence, and a future State;

Bishop

* A few well chosen books on *useful* and *edifying* subjects, by approved authors, are more likely to be read, and therefore to be preferred to a *large* and extensive library, intended too often only for a *show* of learning, and but little used or consulted.

Bishop Beveridge's Private Thoughts ; Tillotson's Sermons ; and Baxter's Saint's Rest.

For your assistance in studying the works of Nature, consult Derham's Physico and Astro-Theology ; Ray on the Creation ; Spectacle de la Nature, or Nature Displayed ; Pearfall's Contemplations and Dialogues ; Religious Philosopher ; and Brown on the Works of Creation, with his Sunday Thoughts. To shew you the value of time, and how to improve it, read Dr. Young's True Estimate of Human Life ; Lucas's Enquiry after Happiness ; and Allen's Guide to Glory.

To instruct you in the principles of morality, the love of virtue, self-knowledge, and œconomy, with a guide to the polite arts, study Seneca's Morals ; the Spectators, Tatlers, Guardians, and Rambler ; Thomson's Seasons ; Mason on Self-Knowledge ; the Gentleman's Library ; and the Preceptor.

To acquaint yourself with the Beauties of Poetry, read Milton's Paradise Lost and Regained, Bysche's Art of Poetry, and Doddsley's Collection of Poems, with Prior's Poems ; Dryden's Works ; Churchill's Poems ; Addison's Cato ; Pomfret's Last Remains ; and Pope's Art of Criticism.

To

To improve yourself in history, antiquities, the arts and sciences, biography and conversation, study Goldsmith's History of England; Burnet's History of his own Times; Fox's Book of Martyrs; Owen's Dictionary of Arts and Sciences; Thomson's and Shaw's Travels; Jackson's Chronological Antiquities; Martin's Magazine of Arts and Sciences; Kennet's Roman, and Potter's Greek Antiquities; Guthrie's History of all Nations; Camden's Britannia; Salmon's Gazetteer, and Guthrie's Geographical Grammar; Dr. Harris's Use of the Globes; Œconomy of Human Life; Locke on the Human Understanding; Rollin's Ancient History, and his Method of studying the Belles Lettres; Plutarch's Lives; Mawe's Every Man his own Gardener; Bradley on Husbandry and Gardening; Burnet's Theory of the Earth; Watfon's Animal World displayed; Wells's Astronomy, and his Art of Shadows; with the Art of Drawing and Painting in Water Colours, published by Bowles.

THE above books, with Johnson's and Barclay's Dictionaries of the English Language, and a few correct sheet Maps of the several parts of the world, will make up a useful, valuable, and entertaining library, not merely for *show*, but service; which may afford an agreeable amusement at all times,

times, especially if you add to them a pair of
globes, a *telescope*, a *microscope*, an *air pump*, a mirror
 for viewing prints, and an electrifying machine.*
 I have now, I hope, answered your enquiries to
 your satisfaction.

MAY your enjoy the Creator in the creature; †
 live to his glory on earth, and after death with
 him for ever in heaven, is the earnest prayer of,

Dear friend, your's, &c.

EAST-END, Finchley,

June 30, 1772.

THERON, jun.

P. S. Let no time be spent without improve-
 ment; no day pass without self-examination; and
 no amusement be indulged in, but what may in
 a greater or less degree, be reckoned *useful*, *orna-*
mental, *manly*, and *instructive*.

* *Ferguson's Select Mechanical Exercises*, *Baker's Treatise*
 on the Microscope, and *Martin's Young Gentleman and Lady's*
Philosophy, will shew you the true use and improvement of
 these several instruments and the apparatus belonging to them.

† The man of piety, virtue, and discretion, however sur-
 rounded with the bounties of Providence, and raised above
 many of his fellow-creatures by the gifts of the Most High,
 will ever experience the good things of life, accompanied
 with a *double* relish, while he looks through the blessings
 given, to the blessed Giver, and is enabled to *live* as well as
speak his praise.

RURAL.



To face 103.



*O far from Cities my abode remove,
To realms of peace, of innocence & love.*

London, Published by J. Parsons 1794.

RURAL SOLITUDE,

OR

THE AUTHOR'S WISH.

Rura mihi, et irrigui placeunt in vallibus omnes. Virgil.

SHOULD gracious heav'n in mercy condescend,
My wish to answer and my prayer attend,
A rural cot should be my lone retreat,
Of health the dwelling, and of peace the seat ;
In some neat village, near a market town,
Alike remov'd from envy and renown,*
There would I live from noise and tumult free,
To anxious cares a happy stranger be ;
There undisturb'd my thoughts should mount on
And learn that useful lesson—how to die. [high,
There would I strive to mend my errors past,
And spend each day preparing for my last ;
While in the town, where dwell the sons of trade,
Continual off'rings are to riches paid,
And fortunes lost, as well as fortunes made. }

AMBITION, pride, and greatness I disclaim,
Nor seek for honours, titles, wealth, or fame.†

A a

Cart

* See the Choice, written by the Rev. Mr. Pomfret.

† The post of honour is a private station. Addison.

Can these procure me health or peace of mind,
 When troubles vex, or by disease confin'd?
 Can they with-hold the fatal stroke of death,
 Or but a moment stay the parting breath?
 Can they secure me from eternal pain,
 Or pardon, righteousness, and glory gain?
 They can't avail me, for they neither know
 To purchase happiness or banish woe.

*Grace, Health, Contentment, I alone implore,
 O grant me these, kind Heav'n! I'll ask no more;
 But patient, waiting what remains behind,
 I'll live thy praises, and I'll die resign'd. (a)*

(a) O sacred solitude! divine retreat!
 Choice of the prudent, envy of the great;
 Here, free from ways of men, laid safe ashore,
 We smile to hear the distant billows roar;
 Here, blest with health, with bus'ness unperplex'd,
 This life we relish, and insure the next.

Written on a pillar in a gentleman's garden, in the county of
 Wicklow, in Ireland.

He e on the Almighty's works, retir'd, I gaze,
 And for their goodness, render him the praise;
 Thus in the Patriarch's time the Jewish swains,
 Who fed their flocks on Mamre's fruitful plains;
 Worship'd JEHOVAH in the woods and field,
 And prais'd his name for all the fruits they yield;
 Implor'd his mercy to direct their ways,
 To guard their nights and sanctify their days.

Mrs. Rowe.

THE

THE PLEASURES OF RETIREMENT.

AN ELEGY.

Oh! blest of Heav'n! whom not the languid songs
Of Luxury the Siren, nor the bribes
Of sordid Wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils
Of pageant Honor, can seduce to leave
Those ever-blooming sweets, which from the store
Of Nature, fair Imagination culls
To charm th' enliven'd soul!——

Akenside.

FAR from the bustle of tumultuous life,
From noise and riot meditation steals;
To some obscure retreat, unknown to strife,
Where Solitude, fair nymph! herself conceals.
Far from the busy scenes of public show,
Oft heaves a sigh, whene'er she thinks of those,
Who down the stream of Pleasure thoughtless flow,
And sacrifice their comfort and repose.
All useless!—all!—one moment's sweet content,
Affords more self-approving conscious ease,
Than ages, 'midst the scenes of folly spent,
Where gaiety and fashion only please:

There, solid judgment and the steady mind,
 Meet with some empty fool's sarcastic smile ;
 There, Sense and Genius, only are assign'd,
 To flatter, cringe, deceive, or to revile :
 There, Insincerity with giant-stride,
 And specious aspect, wounds the gen'rous heart ;
 There, dark Hypocrisy, and Stygian Pride,
 To all, their baleful influence impart.
 In vain Religion tolls her sacred bell,
 In vain, fair Virtue ! tries a friend to find ;
 There baneful Vice and Dissipation dwell,
 And reign triumphant o'er the captive mind,
 Hard the conclusions that are drawn from thence,
 But these are truths that cannot be controul'd ;
 Each day they more and more their ills dispense,
 Each day their devastations we behold.
 Can heaps of wealth and riches purchase peace,
 Or yield true comfort to the wretched breast ?
 Can Fashion make the pangs of conscience cease,
 Or Pleasure lull the *Child of Woe* to rest ?
 Can idle pageantry, or pompous show,
 A firm, substantial happiness insure ?
 O, no—'tis heav'n-born Virtue here below,
 Alone can make our mental peace secure.
 The virtuous mind, on solid base, defies
 The menace of the supercilious great ;
 And tho' in some secluded vale she sighs,
 Looks with disdain on their luxurious state.

'Tis

'Tis her's, with peace to tread the verdant lawn,
 What time the lengthen'd ev'ning-shades descend;
 'Tis her's, to mark the progress of the morn,
 And opening flow'rs that her approach attend.
 'Tis her's to act the benefactor's part,
 To pour on Sorrow's wounds her sov'reign balm;
 To still the feelings of the broken heart,
 To smooth Care's rugged brow, and work a calm.
 Free as the air, she opes her stores to all,
 Nor scorns the homely peasant's frugal fare;
 Alike to her the cot and spacious hall,
 Enough, if Virtue and Content be there.
 The rude, untutor'd hind, by her inspir'd,
 Finds full amends for his unletter'd skill;
 And tho' by no superior genius fir'd,
 Can view her image in the bubbling rill.
 'Tis neither age nor station can controul
 The daring genius of th' aspiring mind;
 Nor check the transports of the virtuous soul,
 Nor countermand what Wisdom has design'd.
 The stately column, rising to the sky,
 The spacious portico, and lofty hall,
 May claim the notice of the passing eye,
 But Wisdom's simplest work excels them all!
 Happy are they! who, far from public noise,
 Enjoy a life of philosophic ease;
 Who pass the fleeting hours in virtuous joys,
 And whom the scenes of rural nature please:

To them, nor anxious care, nor grief is known,
 Nor those sollicitudes which haunt the great ;
 Nor baneful Envy, which attends a throne,
 Nor all those troubles public scenes create.
 For them, the smiling Spring pours forth her sweets,
 For them, gay Summer paints the flow'ry plain ;
 Their eyes prolific Ceres copious greets,
 With golden treasures of autumnal grain.
 To them, ev'n gelid Winter proves a friend,
 Without whom vain would be the ploughman's
 toil !
 On his assistance future crops depend,
 His nitrous stores manure the teeming soil.
 Vain, vain is knowledge, vain Ambition's fire,
 Vain all the gilded toys that please mankind ;
 But blest are those, whom Virtue's charms inspire,
 And peace and wisdom dwell within their mind ;
 For when the ev'ning shades of life descend,
 And youth's refulgent sun retires to rest,
Virtue will prove an ever constant friend,
 And with her warmth revive the gloomy breast :
 To endless scenes of bliss she points the way,*
 With manly fortitude she arms the mind ;—
 When death's cold night excludes life's transient day,
 Then *Virtue's* sons shall joys eternal find.

* Virtue and piety ever lead their followers, to solid peace on earth and endless bliss in heaven.

SOLITUDE BEST SOCIETY ;

OR,

REASONS IN DEFENCE OF SYLVAN RETIREMENT.

This sacred shade and solitude what is it ?

'Tis the felt presence of the Deity ;

Few are the faults we flatter when *alone*.

Dr. Young.

“ **HOW** delightful are the scenes of *rural* nature, especially to the philosophic eye and contemplative mind. I cannot wonder that persons in high life are so fond of retiring from a conspicuous and exalted station, to the covert of a shady grove, or the margin of a chrystal stream ; are so desirous of leaving the smoaky town and noisy street, in order to breathe purer air, and survey the wonders of creation ; in the silent, peaceful villa, and the undisturbed abodes of solitude and retirement.

“ 'Tis

" 'Tis true, in the country, there are none of the modish, I had almost said *meretricious* ornaments of that *false* politeness, which refines people out of their veracity, but an easy simplicity of manners, with an unaffected sincerity of mind. Here the solemn farce of ceremony is seldom brought into play, and the pleasing delusions of compliment have no place; but the brow is the *real* index of the temper, and speech the genuine interpreter of the heart.

" IN the country, I acknowledge, we are seldom invited to see the mimic attempts of human art; but we every where behold the grand and masterly exertions of Divine Power. No theatre erects its narrow stage, surrounds it with puny rows of ascending seats; or adorns it with the shifting series of gorgeous scenery, but fields extend their ample area; at first, lightly clad with a scarf of springing green; then deeply planted with an arrangement of spindling stalks; as a few more weeks advance, covered with a profusion of bearded or husky grain; and at last, richly laden with a harvest of yellow plenty.

" MEADOWS disclose their beautiful bosom; yield a soft and fertile lap for the luxuriant herbage, and suckle myriads of the fairest, gayest flowers; which,

which, without any vain ostentation, or jealous anxiety, rival each other in all the elegance of dress. Groves, of various leaf, arrayed in freshest verdure, and liberal of their reviving shade, rise in amiable, in noble prospect, all around. Droves of sturdy oxen, strong for labour, or fat for the shambles; herds of sleeky kine, with milk in their udders, and violets in their nostrils; flocks of well-fleeced sheep, with their snowy lambkins, frisking at their side; these compose the living machinery. Boundless tracts of bending azure, varnished with inimitable delicacy, and hung with starry lamps, or irradiated with solar lustre, form the stately cieling; while the early breezes and the evening gales, charged with no unwholesome vapours, breeding no pestilential taints, but fanning the humid buds, and waving their odoriferous wings, dispense a profusion of sweets, mingled with the sovereign supports of health.

THIS is the school of industry; this is the magazine of plenty; and are they not incomparably more delightful, as well as infinitely less dangerous, than those seminaries of lewdness and impiety, where dissipation wears the mask of pleasure? than those temples of profaneness and debauchery, where Belial is daily or nightly worshipped with what his votaries

votaries call *musical* recreation, and genteel amusement?

HERE, indeed, is no tuneful voice to melt in strains of amorous anguish, and transfuse the sickening fondness into the hearer's breast; no skilful artist, to inform the lute with musical enchantment, to strike infectious melody from the viol, and sooth away the resolution and activity of virtue, in wanton desires or voluptuous indolence; but the plains low, the hills bleat, and the hollow circling rocks echo with the universal song. Every valley re-murmurs to the fall of silver fountains, or the liquid lapse of gurgling rills. Birds, when the chearful morning rises, or the gentle evening descends, perched on a thousand boughs, play a thousand airs, wildly, yet sweetly harmonious; and did ever music exceed their untaught sprightly warblings? or can any colours outvie their gay and glossy plumage?

“ CHARMED therefore with the finest views, lulled with the softest sounds, and treated with the richest odours; what can be wanting to compleat the delight? here is every entertainment for the eye, the most refined gratification for the ear, and a perpetual banquet for the smell; without any insidious

dious decoy, for the integrity of our conduct, or even for the purity of our fancy.

" O YE blooming walks and flowery lawns, furrounded with dewy landscapes ! how often have patriots and heroes laid aside the burthen of power, and stole away from the glare of grandeur, to enjoy themselves in your composed retreats ? Ye mossy couches and fragrant bowers, skirted with cooling cascades ! how many illustrious personages, after all their glorious toil for the public good, have sought an honourable and welcome repose in your downy lap ?

YE venerable oaks and solemn groves ! woods that whisper to the quivering gale ! cliffs that overhang the darkened floods ! who can number the sages and saints that have devoted the day to study, or the vacant hour to healthy exercise, beneath your sylvan porticos and waving arches ?* that far
from

* *A soliloquy in a grove near Weston Favel, in Northamptonshire.*

Hail ! sacred shade ! where oft in youthful sports,
My blissful hours of sweet retirement sped ;
Far from the busy crowd and noise of courts,
Meek-eyed Simplicity hath hither fled.

Beneath

from the dull impertinence of man, have listened to the instructive voice of God, and contemplated the works of his adorable hand, amidst your moss-grown cells and rocky shades?† How inelegant or insensible is the mind, which has no awakened lively relish for these sweet recesses, and their exquisite beauties.

Hervey's Dialogues.

Beneath thy friendly umbrage, as I stray,
 No rude, no sullen guest my bosom fires;
 Impervious to the sun's meridian ray,
 Thy hallow'd solitude my soul inspires.
 Here, Sophocles in sweetest accents, pour'd
 Instruction's early lesson o'er my mind;
 Here, op'ning Fancy, first, in numbers soar'd,
 And Reason, juvenile delights refin'd.
 Hail! ever sacred shade! serene retreat.
 Parents and kindred friends endear thy bow'rs;
 Hope breathes a whisper that we soon shall meet,
 And that eternity shall then be ours!

† The *contemplative* man, thro' every part of the revolving year, finds new and instructive subjects for his retired meditations; the flowers of the Spring, the fruits of Summer, the harvest of Autumn, and the dreary storms of Winter, all afford ample matter for reflection in *solitude*. See the Frontispiece.

A RURAL

SOBRINUS AND FLORA;

OR,

A MORNING WALK, IN JULY.

IN the morning, pursuing their walk,
Sobrinus and Flora I spied;
How truly improving their talk!
While each object new matter supplied.
Now down thro' the meadows they stray,
Where the verdure refreshes the sight;
But frequently pause by the way,
With apt words to express their delight.
To the hill now their walk they pursu'd,
Where nature appears without art;
And, as Nature's fair portrait they view'd,
This lesson they read to my heart:
With these beauties, how charm'd is the eye;
The prospect how varied and gay!
Those beautiful scenes we espy,
Tho' speechless, instruction convey.
The fields kept so neat and so clean,
Which the farmer each day doth inspect,
Remind me of *home*, that within
There should nought be consum'd by neglect.

The stream that glides smoothly along,
 Bids me never meet passion with rage ;
 If you frown—I will sing a soft song ;
 Your anger, soft words shall assuage.*
 The sheep that enliven the plain,
 Nor far from their shepherd will roam,
 Seem to say, that true pleasure in vain
 Is sought for, if not found at home.
 Dear Flora, that village observe,
 How happy the few who reside ;
 They live without guileful reserve,
 At distance from folly and pride.
 Simplicity walks with the clown ;
 Coy modesty dwells with the fair ;
 But pride is the bane of the town,
 Attended with hurry and care.
 Yon cots the abode of the swains,
 Where blessings, tho' few, greatly please ;
 Such the lot of the peasant, who gains
 With his earnings, contentment and ease.
 There Temperance, healthful and gay,
 Smiles at labour, tho' coarse be his meat ;
 With a song he salutes the new day,
 And his bread and his rest are both sweet.

There

* Proverbs xv. i.

There, obscur'd, modest Worth steals thro' life,
 With Peace, smiling Peace, at his board ;
 To the gay busy crowd they leave strife,
 Nor envy the miser his hoard.
 There Prudence too, neatly array'd,
 Has found a snug wholesome retreat ;
 Her care she owns fully repaid,
 If Colin still finds her discreet.
 Let the Hero stake life for a name ;
 Let Ambition court pomp, shew, and glare ;
 Let the gay waste their days in love's flame ;
 Can they ever with virtue compare ?
 That virtue which seeks yon retreats,
 That devotion those scenes must inspire ;
 O ! let me enjoy their soft sweets,
 Those pleasures which sages admire.
 They illumine the mind with their ray,
 And point to the first forming cause ;
 From each insect, and every spray,
 Reflection an inference draws.*
 Hail Nature ! or rather to thee,
 Jehovah, our praises be paid !
 Whose wild m in nature we see,
 Whose goodness in all is display'd.

* Almost every employment, as well as object, respecting a country life, afford lessons of instruction.

Retired Pleasures.

AN EVENING WALK IN THE COUNTRY,
IN SEPTEMBER.

AN IMITATION.

IT was one of the finest evenings the summer season had produced; the sultry heat being abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk. The heavens were without a cloud—the sun had withdrawn its potent beams, and was gradually declining towards the western sky; but it still shone with a pleasing lustre. The gentle zephyrs fanning their odoriferous wings, and impregnated with the freshest exhalations of nature, breathed the smell of meadows, fields, and groves. At a distance were heard the bleatings of the flocks, mingled with the lowings of the milky kine; while more melodious music warbled from the neighbouring boughs, and spoke aloud the joy of the feathered inhabitants. In short, all nature smiled, and every circumstance concurred, to render my evening excursion truly delightful.

BUT to be more particular—the first spot I traversed was the garden adjoining to my dwelling.

dwelling. It was appropriated to the cultivation of flowers, and in a variety of handsome compartments were assembled the choicest beauties of blooming nature. "Ah!" said I, "what an enchanting situation is this!—What a surprising variety of beauteous, delicate objects are here!—Flowers of all hues, scents, and forms, grow together in a mingled profusion of elegance!—How various, how diversified are their colours!—What a glow is enkindled in some!—What a gloss shines upon others!—How beautifully they are tinged!—How delicately they are shaded!—With what a masterly skill are the varying tints disposed!—Surely the works of Nature are inimitable!—Who can paint like her?—Who can produce such colours? But I must leave you, ye flowery nations; for a little while I bid adieu to all your aromatic sweets, and pursue my solitary walk through the vernal meads.

A LITTLE wicket conducted me into a spacious orchard. The plantation is so nicely adjusted, that it looks like an arrangement of rural piazzas, or a collection of diversified villas. The eye is every where entertained with the greatest uniformity, and darts, with unobstructed ease, from one end of the branching files to the other. The trees were cloathed in verdure, and loaden with

fruits of various taste and smell. With pleasure I surveyed the approaching plenty, and could not help contemplating with gratitude on the bountiful munificence of the great Creator, who has so largely provided for the pleasure and accommodation of man. How the slender branches bend under the pleasing burthen! What clusters of delicious fruit hang on every tender twig!—Breathe soft, ye winds!—O spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts!—Boreas sleep quietly in the chambers of the north, till revolving suns have perfectly ripened and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then what copious hoards of delicious fruit will replenish our store-rooms! What exhilarating juices will they furnish us with, to cheer the heart and elevate our spirits!

I now advance with hasty step to another rural enclosure; a new scene opens to my view. 'Tis a spacious meadow.—Through the midst runs a gentle stream, which, like a polish'd mirror, “reflects the image of the bending skies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow.”* Here a row of tall elms rear their lofty heads; yonder the pale willows, in regular profusion, bend over
the

* Hervey's Meditations on a flower garden.

the murmuring rill, and wave their tassell'd silver ; while the rushes and brakes, the humble shrubs and hedge-rows, all join to ennoble and beautify the pleasing landscape. A little farther toward the north I observe a gently-rising hill, not covered with verdure, but adorned with culinary productions.

I HERE cannot omit taking notice of that delightful arbour, that embowering shade, situated at the entrance of the meadow, upon a conspicuous eminence. Many lonely hours have I sweetly spent in that shady and solitary recess. Secluded from human sight, there I have contemplated the beauties of rural Nature, there lulled away the sultry hours, when the noon-day sun blazed from on high. Nothing can be more delightful to those

—Whom Wisdom and whom Nature charm ;
'To steal themselves from the degen'rate croud,
And soar above this little scene of things ;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet ;
To sooth the throbbing passions into peace ;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks.

Thomson's Autumn.

I NOW proceed pensive and slow along the russet path, till I arrive at the wooden fence. Struck
with

with the prospect, in a moment I leap the bounds, and enter the sequestered grove. What beauties are here! Surely every scene is more and more delightful! What stately trees! What purling brooks! What harmonious melody from the warbling songsters of the groves, gratify and regale my senses! — A narrow lawn on the right, I observe, winds along this elegant enclosure; there I'll direct my walk, and just glance my eye on the various objects. How imperceptibly I descend to the extremity, where I again meet the murmuring rill meandering along the bank, under pendent shades!

NEAR the margin, the aspiring poplar flutters her leaves; and the flexile reeds incessantly bow with the fanning of the evening zephyrs. I had almost forgot to mention yon solitary bush that overlooks the morass, and has weathered for ages the wintry storm. — Quick as thought the animating prospect is lost to my sight, and I enter a gloomy serpentine lawn; but instead of regretting, I welcome the agreeable change: 'Tis a pleasing variety. On the right, a shelving precipice, with venerable oaks and tanglings briars, project a pleasing shade. On the left, a hawthorn hedge, loaden with berries, intercepts my view, and renders the umbrageous walk remarkably retired and awful. I had traversed about a furlong in the lonely,

lonely, dusty lane, when suddenly I slept into open day —

SURPRISING! What a change is this! One instant whelmed, as it were, in Sophronius's cave, where darkness lowers, and horror frowns; transported the next, into the romantic scenes of Arcadia, where all is lightsome, and all is gay. Let me pause a moment, and take a survey of this extensive sylvan scene. Yonder, as far as the eye can see, a long arrangement of lofty hills, with their summits in the clouds, appear full in my view. Nearer to the houses, and at their declivities, immense tracts of tillage extend, but lately unburthened of their rich profusion. See the yellow stubble, and the rugged stalks of the recent harvest! See the green lanchets, and the winding roads, how they chequer the rural prospect!

TOWARDS the west, what a tremendous steepy cliff appears! Were I seated on its towering summit, mine eyes would survey a most noble and extensive prospect indeed. I have often admired the wide expanded scene from that commanding eminence. Populous towns, with their spacious edifices, country villas, and noble buildings, form a curious landscape, and stretch themselves as far as the eye
can

can reach.—But lo! the dew begins to moisten the verdant carpet of Nature, and reminds me it is time to return to my habitation.

RURAL MEDITATIONS IN FAVOUR OF SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN IN THE AUTUMN.

WHEN I walk along my garden, and see the trees, late so blooming and verdant, now divested of their honours, and naked of their leaves which lie withering on the ground; it reminds me of the transitory state of mortals, and the fleeting succession of all things here below. Nor can I help looking upon my fellow-creatures, without concern, when full of these thoughts I exchange the sweets of retirement, for the busy scenes of the metropolis.

THROGGED with multitudes innumerable as the leaves upon a flourishing tree, not one of its present inhabitants shall in a few years remain alive;

alive ; every individual must fall as a leaf ;* when a new generation shall spring forth, occupy their places, be busied for a while in the same manner, and then fade away like their forefathers, and leave their places and possessions to others ! Important as we may think ourselves, nothing in nature will witness our departure ; every thing in life will proceed in its usual channel. A little, very little time, will wipe us entirely from the tablets of human memory ; and the streets, which we now croud so busily, will not be the less thronged for our absence.

WHAT an important lesson should this reflection teach us, and how much ought it to diminish in our esteem, the transitory pursuits and possessions of this *present* world ; but when we consider farther, that as soon as this passing moment of life is over, an immortality awaits us, when *eternal* good or evil must be the certain consequence of our good or evil conduct in this life ;† how absurd
as

* On this side and on that, men see their friends
Drop off, like leaves in Autumn. . . .

Blair's Grave.

† At death, the sentence, whether good or bad, is passed on every individual, which shall be publicly confirmed in the ears of an assembled world at the judgment day.

Turner.

as well as criminal does it render the actions of all those, who, with unwearied anxiety, daily labour to gratify their *worldly* or *sensual* passions!

FOR what are men? calamitous by birth,
 They owe their life and nourishment to earth;
 Like yearly leaves that now with beauty crown'd,
 Smile on the sun, now wither on the ground.
 "Ah! what a striking likeness may we trace
 Between the fallen leaves and mortal race!"
 Yet, yet, how few th' important truth receive,
 Vain in pursuit, and high in hope they live;
 A thousand fruitless scenes their thoughts engage;
 Alike forgetful, or of death or age;
 Toiling while health and strength their pow'r
 supply,
 With busy, restless, fond anxiety!

AH! fools and vain! and will they not be wise;
 Nor know that youth's fair flow'r soon fades and
 dies,
 And life's quick moment like a shuttle flies?*

But

* Man, thoughtless man, whose moments quickly fly,
 Wakes but to sleep again, and lives to die;
 And when this present fleeting life is o'er,
 Man dies to live,——and lives *to die no more*.

But thou, my friend, a better lesson learn,
 And hence instructed, mind thy great concern ;
 To virtue's generous acts thy soul apply,
 In good more active—as so soon to die.

The Visitor.

THE DAWN OF A SUMMER'S DAY.

WRITTEN IN JUNE.

THE beauteous morning dawns forth in the east,
 In cheering smiles and crimson blushes drest ;
 See, as she rises, from her purple wings
 An orient influence all around she flings :
 On the young rose-bud sits the pearly stream,
 And waits th' exhaling of the solar beam ;
 The lucid drops in pendant rows adorn
 The spiry grass, the trem'lous leaf and thorn :
 While from each blossom rises rich perfume,
 More fragrant sweets than from Arabia come.
 The woodbine sends it from yon charming bow'r ;
 Unrival'd ev'n by Sharon's fav'rite flow'r,*

* The Rose. Solomon's Song ii. 1.

Whose mingled odours gratefully arise,
And give the first breath'd incense to the skies.

EARLIEST of birds, the lark forsakes his nest,
Joy swells his notes, joy elevates his breast ;
The little songster teaches man the way
That adoration should precede the day :
Thus shines the Christian when his race begins,
And pardoning love has blotted out his sins :
Like bright Aurora he in smiles appears,
And heav'nly graces is the robe he wears ;
A soft'ning pow'r his new-born spirit feels,
And streaming tears his gratitude reveals.
Not the sweet ointment pour'd on Aaron's head,
And aromatic odours round him shed,
More grateful to the senses could arise
Than the young Christian's ardors to the skies,
When prayers and praises form his sacrifice. }

Soon as the morning dawn his pow'rs awakes,
And sleep his heav'n-uplifted eyes forsakes ;
The recent mercies of the night he sings,
And hails the blessings chearful day-light brings ;
His Saviour and his boundless love employs
The rosy morn ; and his increasing joys
Eternity improves, nor circling time destroys. }

A LADY'S

A SOLILOQUY IN A GARDEN.

WRITTEN BY A LADY.

Solitude's the friend of Contemplation.

Retir'd Pleasures.

WELCOME fair scene! and welcome lov'd
retreat!

From the vain hurry of the bustling great;
Here let me walk, or in this fragrant bower,
Wrap'd in calm thought, improve each fleeting
hour;

My soul (while nature's beauties feast mine eyes)
To nature's God contemplative shall rise.

What are ye now, ye glittering vain delights,
That waste our days and rob us of our nights?
What your allurements? what your fancied joys?
Dress, equipage, and show, and pomp, and noise.
Alas! how low, how tasteless, and how mean,
To the calm pleasures of this rural scene?

C c 2

COME,

-
- * What are all transient sublunary joys?
Thin as a bubble, fleeting as a shade;
Which pain embitters, or which death destroys,
Which please awhile, and while they please us, fade.

COME, then, ye shades, beneath your bending
arms,

Enclose the fond admirer of your charms ;
Come, then, ye bow'rs, receive your chearful guest,
Glad to retire, and in retirement blest ;
Come, ye fair flowers, and open every sweet,
Come, little birds, your warbling songs repeat ;
And O descend ! to sweeten all the rest,
Soft smiling Peace ! in white rob'd virtue drest ;
Content unenvious, ease with freedom join'd,
And contemplation calm, with truth refin'd :
Deign but in this fair scene with me to dwell,
Then noise and nonsense, pomp and show farewell ;
And see, O see ! the heav'n-born train appear !
Fix then, my heart, thy happiness is here.

Mrs. Rowe.

THE TRUE END OF RETIREMENT.

Retire ; the world shut out ; thy thoughts call home.

Night Thoughts.

WE cannot have a nobler motive to retirement,
than upon the score of *Religion*. To shut out the
prospect

prospect of *this* world, that we may take the better view of a *future* state, is a prudent precaution. 'Tis certainly good to retreat from company, and bar the door upon diversions and the strife of tongues; and when we are thus disengaged, to inspect our practice, look into our accounts, and examine our condition for *eternity*.

'Tis good to make a stand by ourselves, and consider how well we are reconciled to a state of separation; we should endeavour to disentangle our desires before-hand, untwist our affections, and slide off (as it were) from the world by degrees. And since the objects of time and sense will shortly fail us, let us apply to a more lasting fund, and subsist our happiness upon thought.

To retire for such purposes as these, is the best improvement of solitude:* to be thus alone, is the way to bring us to the most desirable company. Those who have attained to that superiority of mind, as to be above all anxious worldly cares, tho' they meddle with (as being *of*) the world, yet they

* To examine seriously, what *good* foundation we have to hope of being happy beyond the grave, can never be unreasonable, nor too often put in practice, whether in *town* or *country*.

they do it so safely, that they cleave not to, nor are afraid to leave it.

Gentleman's Library.

If our affections are set wholly on the earth and the things of it, we shall undoubtedly be loath as well as unfit to leave it *; but if by *spiritual* and *heavenly* contemplations we frequently get above it in our thoughts and desires, we shall be the more ready, willing, and prepared to take our *last* farewell of all its transitory pleasures and enjoyments; and to welcome joys *eternal* and *divine*.

* A late eminent poet's advice is worthy universal approbation and regard;

Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.

Night Thoughts.

THE AUTHOR'S INTENDED EPITAPH,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Here are deposited the Remains of —
Who, in a *middle* Station of Life, enjoyed
All that Happiness and Felicity,
In a SYLVAN RETIREMENT,
Which the
YOUNG, AMBITIOUS, and the GAY,
Seek for in vain,
In the pursuit of
Pleasures, Honours, and Emoluments.
He lived gratefully sensible of the
GIFTS of PROVIDENCE,
And died rejoicing
In the pleasing Hope, thro' CHRIST,
Of inheriting Eternal Bliss
In Glory.

*Slave to no sect, who took no private Road,
But look'd thro' Nature up to Nature's God.*

Reader, go Home, study the Bible,
And prepare for Death.

F I N I S.

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